

P R E F A C E

THE following Lectures are issued under all the disadvantages which attend posthumous publication. They were delivered by the late Professor Christie in the Spring of 1880 ; and it was his intention to prepare them for publication in the course of the past winter. This purpose he did not live to accomplish ; and the work has thus failed to receive the Author's final revision. No alterations have been made on the MS., except such occasional modifications of diction as would naturally be made in revising a work for the Press.

It is believed that the publication of the Lectures, apart from their intrinsic value, will be welcomed as an appropriate memorial of departed worth by a large circle of friends who mourn the removal of the author in the midst of his strength and usefulness.

ABERDEEN, *May*, 1890.

LECTURE I.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION.

To discuss the Historical Development of Religion, and to indicate the forces acting to produce the results which history records, is a task of much complexity, and the conclusions which may be reached must of necessity be liable to more or less question. According to the theory from which we start will be the views entertained of the various incidents. One will see the supernatural in everything exclusively, and will ignore any other element. Another will eliminate the supernatural altogether, and see nothing but the operation of natural forces. In one case all is miracle, in the other nothing is so. Without discussing such extreme theories, they may be set down *primâ facie* as too extreme for either to include the whole truth. The theory on which I propose to discuss religious phenomena assumes the

operation of both natural and supernatural forces—not always balanced alike, yet always acting in conjunction.

The proper sphere of religion is the supernatural. It deals with matter beyond natural cognisance, and therefore must be based on Revelation. To what extent, or in what sense, there is Natural Religion may be subject of debate. Such truths as it includes are inferentially reached by reasoning back from effects to their cause. From the nature of such a process the conclusions lack that certainty and sanction which are required in order that they may be trusty guides for direction in duty, or a firm basis on which to rest man's religious hope. Supernatural Religion does not, however, despise them. If it does not reveal them, in the strict acceptation of the term, it inspires them, assumes them, recognises them, lends to them the weight of its own authority, clears them from dubiety and dimness, and breathes into them a life and power which they do not in themselves possess. Thus Religion—properly supernatural—acts on and through the natural. In its historical development, therefore, there is a constant co-operation of the

two elements or factors—the one fundamental, real and efficient, the other acted upon, yet not altogether passively, but itself active and modifying, promoting or retarding the other. Thus a consideration of Supernatural and Natural Religion authenticates the existence of the two elements whose historical operation it is proposed to trace.

Again, the religious ideal, concrete religion, is most perfectly realised in the duplex nature of Christ. He is its concrete ideal. He is God-Man, possessing perfectly and distinctly the Divine and human natures, which in Him alone work perfectly and with perfect harmony, in perfect balance and equilibrium. This analogy of the “Author and Finisher of our faith” confirms the view which assumes the two elements as requisite for a complete theory of Religion. And in the constitution of man, who is the special subject of Religion, there is both a natural and a supernatural element—something in virtue of which he properly belongs to the world of nature, but something also which raises him above it—the image of God stamped upon his soul. The Pauline Psychology assumes as much in its tripartite division of man’s nature into

body, soul (living principle), and spirit. The former two he has in common with animate beings, the last is peculiar to himself. In it lies man's alliance with God and man's susceptibility for religion, and without it he could neither receive, assimilate, nor apply the religious idea.

It may often be difficult to draw an exact line between the Human and Divine when analysing a particular fact or incident in the history of Religion, or to define precisely where the one begins or the other ends, but for all purposes of utility their proper action may be sufficiently distinguished. Sometimes the one and sometimes the other will be the more apparent and in predominant force, and give a distinctive character to the action accordingly. On the whole, however, they will be found working together in such balance that each will have its fair and proper influence.

The duality of forces which are assumed as conditioning the phenomena of Religion, we have spoken of as Natural and Supernatural, or Human and Divine. They may be viewed in different aspects according to the form in which they enter into the action. Thus

regarded in an informative point of view, or according to the mode in which they reach their conclusions or set forth their principles, they may be spoken of as Reason and Revelation. Or regarded as to their mode of producing their results, they may be distinguished as Freedom and Authority, according as man in the former case acts more within his own competency, or in the latter defers to a superior, and, as it were, external influence. In whatever aspect, however, the two forces may be regarded, their direct action, interaction, and cross action are observable in the whole progress of religious history whether of act or opinion; and, taking these elements as our foundation or postulate, we shall have to set forth the part they played in the religious history of our race, confining our view especially to that Religion which is based on the Revelation we accept, which gradually unfolded its principles through the pre-Christian ages, and which as a revelation came to perfection in the age of Christ and His Apostles, while its final and full consequences are reached only at the consummation of all things.

The conditions of the problem must lead us to

anticipate that, while the progress shall virtually be continuous, yet it will not always be manifestly so. We are not to expect a steady unchecked advance. Periods will occur of great impulse, but there will likewise be periods of check and even of apparent retrogression, periods of ebb as well as of flow, when religion seems to come back to the point from which it started. This arises from the presence of the human factor and from its improvement, or mis-improvement, of the Divine provision. The same general cast of thought recurs in ages far removed from each other in time. The mind of man, ever ready to push its enquiries into new fields, is after all bounded by a horizon, which, if it is wide, is yet not boundless. History repeats itself. Hence the great similarity which ages far removed from each other often strikingly present. Similar causes produce similar, if not identical, results. Innate affinities of intellect, likeness of culture, correspondence in surrounding circumstances, such influences lead to cycles of reproduction and to a parallelism between periods which might seem so far apart as to exclude the idea of a causative connection. Age on age passes through kindred processes; and in the human mind,

as in nature, there are certain archetypal forms which dominate and confine the process of development, and which limit and condition all its strivings. Man moves within a circle. There may be much variation in form, but the irrepressible tendency is to adhere to the archetype. The process of evolution is counter-acted by a contrary process of retro-volution. Plato and Kant are far sundered in time, yet they are alike in stating the ground law of pure reason in opposition to empiricism. Hume and Berkely arrive at like conclusions with the Greek Sophists. The propositions of Abelard and Spinoza may be read in almost parallel passages. The system of Schelling is but a more scientific presentation of that ideal Pantheism upon which primitive Orientalism delighted contemplatively to dwell. The world of ideas is like that circumscribed globe on which man dwells. At most it may be circumnavigated. However many the discoveries of the voyager, he must come back again in a returning circle to the point from which he set forth.

This law of reproduction, so imperative in the spheres both of matter and mind, is nowhere more manifest than in the sphere of Theology. Theology

is philosophy seeking scientific unity with a historical evolution, and striving to find the laws which underlie the conjunction of the Divine with the Human. But no limited intellect can grasp the whole question at once. Apart from the New Testament Revelation no single age has attempted such a Herculean task. Consequently each age, according to circumstances, has taken up some one or other leading feature of religious thought and made that its speciality and distinctive characteristic. The early dogmatic period of Christianity is marked by the controversy of Arius. The problem of Freewill and Necessity distinguishes that of Augustine. In the latter era of Scholasticism, the dispute between Nomination and Realism underlies profound views of original sin and redemption. The theology of the Reformation is swayed by the great principle of Justification through Faith. Each period has its own question. Ideas which one day are of vital interest are quite relegated into the background the next. Yet, amid all these fluctuations, we ever behold the law of reproduction, the old questions are repeated in new form, and the reigning tendencies of belief and unbelief are cast in similar mould. Socinus

developes the germ of Arius. Calvin reproduces Augustine. The writings of the Greek fathers anticipate the tenets of Arminius. The High Church movement revives the views of Cyprian and Vincentius. A steadily progressive movement is not therefore to be expected in the History of Religion. There is now vigour; then feebleness, now ebb, and then flow.

The action of the two co-ordinate, or rather co-operating, forces (Natural and Supernatural), in different religious periods, it will be our object to set forth and illustrate. In some the Divine principle—Revelation, Authority—was the preponderant force. In others, it seems to withdraw from special prominence, and to give play to the action of Reason and Humanism. Through all the period embraced within the Old Testament Revelation there was a continued, if not at all times an equally intense, supernatural force in exercise. Then followed a period of supernatural quiescence, when Inspiration ceased, during which Humanism was at liberty to digest the past, and to exercise itself unfettered upon the truths already made known or suggested through special Revelation. This was the period of Reason dealing with the materials

supernaturally provided, whether in explicit and authoritative terms, or in historical narratives interpenetrated by Divine causation. Then there is the brief, comparatively speaking, but intense period of Christian Revelation. The Supernatural Revelation spoke its last words explicatory of the past, infinitely suggestive for all future time, and left them for the exercise of the human mind in all ages. To this there succeeded the Apologetic period, when the young Christianity had not only to defend itself against the prejudice and clamour of the vulgar, and the brute force of a hostile Imperialism, but when it had to encounter the assault of Reason, when the keenest intellects of Christians, as well as of unbelievers, were devoted to the critical study of questions propounded for their consideration. The new Revelation had to vindicate its pre-eminent claims, or, at least, its propositions had to be freely examined and fully discussed before any general and formal pronouncement could be agreed upon. This again was succeeded by the Dogmatic period (A.D. 400 to A.D. 600), the period of settling in express terms the cardinal doctrines which had undergone exhaustive discussion in the previous age, and were, therefore,

now fit to be formulated in precise language expressive of the results and conclusions of full controversy. As in the Apologetic age Reason was the more prominent force, so in this the *ultima ratio* was Authority—Revelation. The necessary consequence was the closing of debate on the main principles of Christian faith, at least in connection with the controversies which had hitherto prevailed. Dogmatic authoritative decisions and definitions discourage the reopening of questions which they profess to have settled. Consequently the Dogmatic period naturally introduced a season of religious quiescence continuing until the intellectual revival into activity during the age of Scholasticism—a period of the deepest interest, although, from its immediately preceding antagonism to the Reformation, it lies under something of obloquy as favouring Rationalism in contradistinction to that Scripturalism which the next era initiated, and which has been the prevailing characteristic of our own, and still more of the immediately preceding age. This Scholastic age treated the accepted dogmas in a rationalistic form, but did not pretend to alter their substance as they had previously

come to be accepted. It was pre-eminently a dialectical age, expository rather than inventive. Then follows a revival of the Divine element at the period of the great Reformation in the 16th century. We cannot call it wholly a return to the dicta of Revelation, for the intellectualism of the preceding period could not be entirely eliminated. But preponderantly it implied a return to the dicta of God's Word, and sought to establish religious truth on its authority. Under this phase of religious feeling the Word obtained the normative position which it had attained almost a thousand years before. The Written as opposed to the Traditional came into the first place. It was no longer a case of free speculation on the cases provided by Revelation. It became the age rather of Exegesis—an exegesis which, however, did not exclude the authority of the ancients, but more or less consciously deferred to them.

As during the 200 years of Apologetism the doctrines of the Christian faith were discussed without being authoritatively settled, so for a period somewhat similar (perhaps not so long) in duration the Reformation discussion continued. Within the 16th

and 17th centuries the great Churches of Christendom settled themselves as regards the faith. Their Confessions were drawn up in the shape in which they are now accepted. Again, a period of religious quiescence followed, until during the last and especially the present century the old questions have been reopened even to their lowest foundations. Now we have the contentions of all previous ages in full vigour, however diverse and antagonistic, whether they may appeal to Authority or claim the exercise of Rational Freedom, whether tending to the Divine or to the Human. Chaos seems to have returned, and the earnest cry of honest and anxious souls is "Who will show us any good?" The answer to be given is the same as of old—"Lord, lift Thou upon us the light of Thy countenance!" Long ago, Augustine interpreted this need of our nature in the well-known words, "Thou hast made us for Thee, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee." Of the two elements involved in man's nature and in the religious history of his race, the Divine must predominate. Only when he yields himself to this shall he partake of the joy of that consummation time when "God shall be all in all."

This brief sketch will suggest how varied and complex is the history of the subject with which we deal, how alteration succeeds alteration from age to age, how similar in complexion are periods far distant from each other, how now the Divine and now the Human forces attain alternately conspicuous prominence. The dominating force which gives unity and continuity to the whole is the Divine; the more varying force is the Human, according as it asserts itself, or humbly feels its incapacity to solve the great problems of Religion. Now it grapples with the highest problems as in the Titanic war against the gods; now it is cast down and gives up the contest, like the giant Antæus in the grasp of Hercules—thrown prone on the top of his mother earth—yet again recruiting his strength to renew by and by the unequal conflict. With varying fortune the struggle is continued. God strives to elevate the Human towards His own level: Humanism strives to bring down the Divine to its level. Progress (if such there be) goes on by conflict. The consummation only comes when “God shall be all in all.” In so far as relates to the *apparatus criticus*, i.e. the sources of

information on which we base our argument, and from which we unfold it—that is substantially the earlier Old Testament Scriptures, and primarily the Pentateuch. The issues around which controversies of the present day rage—whether these books in their present form are a late recension, or of the very archaic age to which we have been accustomed to refer them—whether they are substantially a harmony of various documents, or whether they are referable to the authorship to which they have been usually ascribed—whether they are homogeneous, or a harmony of heterogeneous elements—whether some are of early and others of a much later age—all this does not come within the compass of our present argument. These are questions of criticism, and do not touch the points with which we have to deal. We take the Old Testament Scriptures as informative both regarding fact and principle—as declaratory both of the Divine and human, the supernatural and natural elements in the evolution of religious historical development. But we must notice also that the main purpose of our Scriptures is not to be historical, but to be didactic, not to narrate facts, inci-

dents, but to convey spiritual lessons. We have no continuous history. The sacred writers are not annalists, they only present certain facts of history, by no means in continuous sequence, and not for the purpose of presenting them as facts, but of making them the vehicles for communicating and illustrating ethical and religious truths.

In accordance with the theory of Scripture just enunciated it follows that the Divine element will be brought into special prominence, while the human element will be left in the background. The human conditions were contemporary, and would be assumed as known and familiar. What the sacred writer had to do was to present the facts with their spiritual interpretation. He had to point the view of the observer to the principles which underlay the objective facts, and would therefore naturally allude to the facts only for the purpose of interpreting their spiritual meaning. This meaning was his prime object, not the fact, which was only a casual illustration of the principle. Consequently the History of Religion, so far as it is contained in the canonical Scriptures, is fragmentary. The narrative is disjointed. Historically it is incon-

tinuous. This furnishes abundant scope for the objectors to a historical basis for religious doctrine. At the same time it proposes an equally powerful incentive to the spiritual commentator to read between the lines, to magnify allusions which a dogmatic influence in old times put into the background without consideration—in short to welcome, instead of repudiating, all the side lights which modern research has provided for filling up the *lacunae* (so called) of inspired narrative. Even in the New Testament historical basis of the Christian faith this fact is very clearly elucidated. Not to speak of the Acts, which give historical accounts of the planting and spread of Christianity, but in which it is obvious that the spiritual intention predominates over the historical, that the writer is writing Christianity and not the annals of Christianity, and that he is not giving a biography of Peter and John in the first part, nor of Paul in the latter and far more extensive portion of his Book; and not to speak of allusions to facts in the epistolary portion of the New Testament, mentioned only for their spiritual meaning, nothing can be more plain than that the primary object of these

Scriptures is not annalistic detail, but exposition of principles—in fact, that the writers contemplated not a History, but a Philosophy of Sacred History. The historical detail is the medium for enunciating grand, ever-pervading principles which underlie, and are illustrated by the facts, incidents, and transactions of a specific period. But such period has no monopoly for the display of those principles. *Mutatis mutandis*, they recur in all ages, and not merely in those included within the compass which Christian consciousness has stamped with peculiar, authoritative, and canonical sacredness as specially inspired.

No more striking example of the principle we have ventured to enunciate can be adduced than that part of the New Testament which has the fullest historical details, and which professes to give in most complete and circumstantial manner the life of Jesus. We have four narratives. Of these, only two profess to describe incidents connected with His birth, childhood, and life previous to His public ministry. In details they differ. It is clear that Matthew and Luke wrote with a didactic purpose. Cognisant of the facts (so largely romanced upon in the Apocryphal gospels)

they relate different incidents obviously with a didactic aim. We find it difficult to piece them together into continuous consistent biography, while we find no difficulty whatever in educing from them certain principles and lessons suitable for all times and all ages of man, illustrative of Him who to the fulness of Godhead added the perfection of manhood with all its weakness, sin only excepted. After the entrance on the public ministry the four biographies run parallel, and yet a harmony of them is very difficult, if not impossible, to the full satisfaction of a critical even though not captious mind. Yet not one statement by any of the biographers need be regarded as untruthful. Indeed the very difficulty of harmonising them confirms our faith, unless we insist on that mechanical theory of inspiration which excludes the action of the human element altogether. We are bound to expect that different narrators should shew divergences in their narratives. Their eye was fixed more on the principles illustrated than on the facts by which they were illustrated. As to principles, they must, if honest, differ in the means of illustration. They were not tied to strictness of chronological suc-

cession. Each presented the facts according to his own conception of the spiritual lessons he sought to inculcate. Based on a historical foundation the facts in all would be substantially the same, yet, according to the special intention of each, these facts would be selected and presented. Prominence would be given to some things by one which would be little more than alluded to by another, if alluded to at all. Under all the circumstances in which the Evangelists wrote, we can easily conceive a unity, yet variety, in the presentation of concrete Christianity in Christ, which will abundantly account for those critical difficulties in regard to the Evangelical narratives, of which scepticism has not been slow to take advantage, but which, on due consideration, will tend to confirm rather than discredit their veracity. A Divine unity (when we look deep enough) is found to be in perfect accordance with human variety. The two principles, Human and Divine, fall into their proper place, and are recognised, not as antagonistic, but as complementary.

It thus appears that with all the wealth and variety of detail in the four Evangelical narratives of Christ's life, we yet feel ourselves deficient in materials for con-

structing a continuous biography of the Lord Jesus. How much more must this apply to the sparse notices of early religious history, going back to primeval times and traversing, not a triennium, but milleniums. In the historical records of Religion, which profess to trace it in its principal development from the origin of man down to the fulness of the time, shall we expect complete historical clearness, continuity, and consistency? In so far as principles are concerned we are entitled to look for such. In so far as illustrative narrative is concerned we have no right to expect it. On the contrary, we are bound to expect dislocation, incontinuity, episodical and not annalistic narrative. Facts are narrated only in so far as they convey lessons. Much is assumed of a knowledge which has long perished, or which can only be recalled by patient research, or which is alluded to in the most unostentatious and passing manner. From this it follows that it is not only allowable, but necessary to accept all external information which may aid us in realising contemporary human conditions—all the side lights which can be brought to bear on the elucidation of circumstances contained in the sacred story. What-

ever serves to present to us the co-existent state of things in any particular connection, in supplement to what the sacred narrative contains, helps towards a more rational and profitable conception of the position on which we are to form a judgment—further, in short, our more adequate apprehension of the co-operation of the Divine and human elements in the historical development in fact and faith of our Heavenly Religion.

LECTURE II.

PRIMEVAL REVELATION.

THE Primeval Revelation given in the opening chapters of Genesis has been the great battlefield on which criticism and science have wielded their weapons against revealed truth. Every sort of argument has been employed, every kind of consideration has been adduced to discredit both the authority and veracity of that primeval record. It has been assailed as puerile, fitted only to satisfy the childhood of man, which is ready credulously to accept insufficient reasons for facts of nature and history. It has been denounced as unscientific, and even contrary to the certain conclusions which science has reached. The attack both of critics and scientists was inevitable. Revelation could not escape the ordeal. It had a crisis to pass through. Such periods of crisis recur from time to time. When human thought receives a great impulse (which is the case only

periodically), when it enters into a state of special excitation, it cannot avoid contact and conflict with the past, and especially with the record of the earliest accepted opinion. All praise to the searching, fearless criticism of Scripture by which recent times have been distinguished. Its aberrations may well be pardoned in consideration of its undoubted services in giving us a deeper insight into the Inspired Word. If it has shaken foundations of opinion superficially laid, it has served to lay them more deeply and firmly. The attack has brought forth the defence. The thoroughness of the one has contributed to the thoroughness of the other. And reviewing the stage now reached in the modern attack on Christianity, we can gather this result with confidence and thankfulness, that our Faith stands as impregnable in the blaze of light shed on its darkest portions, as ever it did, when ignorance was said to be the mother of piety.

Equally inevitable was the temporary conflict between Science and Revelation, in our own age. The vast and rapid progress of science has been a characteristic of recent times. The boundaries of our knowledge of Nature have been vastly extended. Scientific

truths, unknown and undreamed of by our fathers, are now familiar as household words. Nor have they been only an increase to the knowledge of the learned ; they have been made ministrants of knowledge to all. The true Science of Nature may be said to be only as of yesterday. At least Science has of late extended our knowledge of nature to an extent unprecedented in all past ages. In so far as Revelation seemed to teach or touch upon Natural Science, there could not but be a comparison between Science and Revelation. The question could not be avoided. Do the teachings of the two agree ? The same God of Revelation and of Nature cannot be in self-contradiction. If contradiction can be proved between the dicta of Science and Revelation, then either one or other must be untrue. Science refuses to yield, therefore Revelation must give way. Sometimes it has been attempted to escape from the dilemma by holding that Revelation does not profess Science, introducing it only by way of illustration, and that it speaks in popular and not in scientific language. All that is true, and more true than is often admitted. Still the human mind will not rest content until even apparent contradic-

tions are satisfactorily reconciled, or at least until ground is shewn why such reconciliation should not be reasonably expected. This result cannot be said to have been as yet fully attained. Yet a decided approximation towards that end has been made. The theological terror of Science has been greatly quieted. Difficulties that startled and shocked on their being first propounded, have on fuller examination been seen to be less formidable and fatal than they originally appeared. Conclusions based on Revelation, and accepted as unquestionable, have been subjected to reconsideration, and with every advantage to the cause of Scripture, broadening and deepening our views of inspired teaching ; while Science also has been putting off some of its dogmatism, and especially has been renouncing some of its inferences from ascertained scientific truth, and has been acknowledging that there is no such discrepancy between itself and Revelation as might at first sight appear. Neither the depths of Revelation nor those of Nature have been exhaustively explored. Until Revelation has yielded up its ultimate teaching and Nature has revealed its innermost secrets, the final adjudication cannot take place. That position is yet

far in the future, nor may it be expected in time. Here it will always be true that we know in part, hereafter only shall we know fully. Here is the sphere of faith. Hereafter only is that of full vision.

The proper way of viewing Primeval Revelation is not to study the difficulties which may be started against the form or details of its teaching, but to study what it really does teach; not to perplex ourselves about how it sets forth, but what it sets forth. Whether it is history or parable is a question of secondary consequence to that of the spiritual lesson which it can be shown to convey. This we say not as admitting the objections to the historical veracity of Primeval Revelation in Genesis, but only as suspending such a discussion, and passing over it meantime, in order to approach the more important subject of what religious conclusions it really and unquestionably does inculcate.

Regarding Primeval Revelation in this point of view we shall find it no sterile field, yielding only the gleanings of simple, old world, inchoate truths and principles, but full of significance, pregnant with truths which all succeeding history and experience have only unfolded, exemplified, authenticated, and confirmed.

We shall find it a most worthy introduction to that long period of Revelation recorded in the Pentateuch and subsequent books of our Inspired Canon. The threshold of Revelation ushers us, as it were, at once into the very inmost recesses of the sanctuary, where difficulties are removed, darkness made light, and the truth of God made clear as far as it can be in our present imperfect state.

The subjects with which Primeval Revelation deals are multifarious and important. In fact they include all those more important topics on which the human mind has ever exercised itself—God, Nature, Man, Sin, Redemption ; the origin of the material universe, called into existence by the fiat of the Deity ; then a mysterious break, of incalculable unknown duration, issuing in a formless void, ushering in a period of renewed Divine activity, when the Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters ; then the re-arrangement of the material universe and its preparation for man's era ; then the crowning of the work by the creation of man, whose case is taken up and dealt with primarily and prominently all through the following record—his original upright condition, his fall, its

consequences, his recovery, and so on—the great principle first enunciated gradually assuming a concrete form in specific individuals ; the teeming fountain gushing into the narrow rill, and spreading out far and wide in its onward flow till it covers the earth and the ages, till it embraces the whole race—peoples, nations, kindreds, tongues—losing itself at last in the boundless ocean of eternity.

Thus Primeval Revelation boldly undertakes the greatest questions, and with a precision, terseness, and decision wholly remarkable gives its solution of them. It is as it were the text, of which the Inspired Record is the commentary. It strikes the key-note of a very various harmony. Whether it is in unison with that long drawn-out song will go far to settle our opinion as to its Divine original. It tells the end from the beginning, and if it does so truthfully that will go far to identify its authorship with Him to whom the end is known from the beginning—in whose view the whole plan of time and eternity is seen at a glance, and who unfolds His purposes as men are able to receive them.

Within our limited compass we can do little more than state the truths involved in this Primeval Revelation :—

1. Its doctrine of God, and the relation of God to Nature. It exhibits the Deity as eternal, preceding the "beginning" when His creative act was done—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The doctrine of a personal God is impressed on the whole narrative—He works, He speaks, "God created," "God said, 'Let there be light,'" and so on.

Then also the relation of God to Nature is set forth as that of cause and effect. God is the Self-existent. Nature, whether material or spiritual, derives its existence from Him. The long agitated question of Theism and Materialism is anticipated, and pronounced upon with no ambiguous decision. The dictum of Primeval Revelation is unquestionably clear, as somewhat transcendently stated by the old Alexandrian Jewish Philosopher, Philo, the contemporary of Christ (*ob.* after A.D. 39), who defines God as "the Existent" ($\tau\omicron\delta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$), and Matter as "the Non-existent." ($\tau\omicron\delta\ \mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$). On the very threshold of time we have a testimony, clear and unambiguous, to that view of Deity, which is consistently maintained through all succeeding Revelation. Before competing and conflicting ideas come into the arena, Scripture pronounces that decision, which it has un-

flinchingly maintained. It refuses to accept any eternal subsistence of matter, to acknowledge any theory which evolves the present material frame of things from matter itself. It protests against Atheism which would dispense with a God, and against Pantheism which would identify Divinity with Nature, and much more against Polytheism, a variety of Pantheism, which in its purest form deifies qualities, making an abstract idea or quality not merely a scientific generalisation, but a Divinity. There is no tentative reasoning back from the visible to the invisible, from Nature to Nature's God. On the contrary, God is boldly set forth, to begin with, as the Primal Cause, from whom and through whom all that exists is derived. There is no slow process of rising from the lower to the higher, from earth to heaven. Heaven is at once opened. The first scene in the great drama of the universe and time presents God seated on His throne, commanding into existence, controlling, ordering, and arranging all that belongs to Nature, Creation, and Time. Religion is presented to us, as it were, not from its lower, but from its upper side, *i.e.*, in the order of sequence in time, and not in the order which human investigation would follow.

And what is this but Revelation speaking and not Science, inspired deduction as contrasted with human induction. The theory of Primeval Revelation is to postulate, not to prove Deity. According to human scientific principles Primeval Revelation should have come last, instead of first, as it undoubtedly does. Here God reveals Himself directly, and not through types, by an *à priori* assertion, and not by an *à posteriori* induction.

2. In the order of Primeval Revelation we come to the consideration of the natural world as constituted by God. The natural world—heavens, earth, seas, with their glorious lights and teeming inhabitants are facts. They exist, and have always existed, since man existed to exercise his enquiring mind in accounting for their origin. Man calls on Revelation to give such account. Revelation responds to the call. Nor can we fail to mark—

(a) The great contrast between the instantaneousness of the first creative act, when “God spake and it was done,” and the gradual process of forming the world of nature into the shape which it now exhibits. Is this theory of a gradual process con-

trary to the instincts and experience of humanity? Certainly not. The experience of man is uniform, and to the effect that forces work out by degrees (and not *per saltum*) their results. Time is not less an essential element than force in the production of any specific condition of things. Or is this theory of gradual process contradictory to the conclusions of science, especially of Geological Science, as presently reached? Certainly not. Ages of indefinite duration mark the transition from one geological era to another. Eozoic (dawn of life); Paleozoic (old life); Mesozoic (middle life); Neozoic (new, or modern life), these in the geological history of the earth are rough descriptions of periods of incalculable duration by slow degrees passing from the earlier into the later stage. It is legitimate, at least, to suppose that the description in Genesis of the six days' (misnamed) creational action represents the transition from a previous condition of the earth to that in which it was fitted to become the habitation of man, to whom, indeed, it is the special object of the Genesis narrative to direct attention. Upheavals, subsidences, alternations of sea

and dry land; climatic changes, now tropical, now glacial—all these have passed over the same spots of the earth's surface, if we can believe, as we do not doubt, or desire to doubt, the assertions of science. Surely these are not in disaccord with that primeval account of the gradual arrangement of our globe for the habitation of man which we have in the book of Genesis. Whether from point to point they accord I will not pretend to say or shew. This is a question still remaining for final consideration, but in a growingly hopeful state for satisfactory settlement.

(β) We must remark on the fearlessness as to details of Revelation, fully meeting the fearless dogmatism of science. As between the two the future must decide which is in the right, or which has the best of the argument unnecessarily raised between them.

(γ) As a consideration not unworthy of particular notice, we may remark on the symmetry of the narrative in Genesis, and its obvious correlation of precedent and subsequent, its intention of shewing preparation for what is to follow. The Divine work of arrangement (as distinguished from the Divine act of creation) is described as going through a

period called six days. Of these, the first three are preparatory, and the second three are completional. The preparation of the first is complemented by the result of the fourth; the work of the second day is to be read along with the work of the fifth, and that of the third day with that of the sixth, thus completing the preparation of this earth for the habitation of man, whose creation is introduced as a culmination of the whole work—occupying a place apart from, and above all the previous work—as if it were the point to which every preceding detail should lead up, as if nature were only, as indeed it is, a foundation for the superstructure of anthropology, as if heavens and earth had their final cause in man.

3. The condition of man next comes in the order of the primeval narrative of creation. Inanimate and lower animate nature have led up to him. He is the last creative effort of God. We confidently ask of Science whether this is not in accordance with its ascertained facts? Apart from all unsettled questions as to man's geological antiquity, it may be taken for granted that he appeared late, and last among the creatures which belong to the present epoch or period of earth's time. So far, then, Scripture and Science agree.

Further, an essential distinction is made between man and all other terrene creatures. He only is made in the image and likeness of God. A pause is made, a period is marked in Gen. i, 25, "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth on the earth after his kind." Then comes a pause in the description, as much as to signify a break in the action, marked by the use of the phrase denoting the close of each previous period: "And God saw that it was good." Then man's creation is described, and both the form and terms of the description distinguish that Divine act as occupying a position distinct from all the acts which preceded it. Now, is not this in accordance with science and experience? In a certain kind of classification, man may be ranked with other creatures formed by God's hand. Thus he is a mammal, and so on. But does not science, except what is falsely or imperfectly so called, acknowledge him to be what the Genesis narrative roughly defines him—a being apart from, and superior to, all other, even the highest being on earth? It may be matter of interest to enquire whether this theory of humanity—as primevally upright, but ulti-

mately degenerating to the condition of corruption and sin in which man now exists, is most in agreement with fact and truth, or whether the contrary theory of man's advance from the lower to the present, from the bestial to the human, from the anthropoid ape to the man, is the more accordant with fact and true science. On these questions Inspiration, with which the mythological traditions of a golden age agree, speaks with no uncertain sound: and human instinct and feeling thoroughly agree with its dictates.

Here also we may notice that the Genesis theory of man's original state is perfectly consistent with that of his consummation, as set forth in the New Testament. Man—originally represented by the first Adam—created in a state of innocence (not perfection), by no natural necessity, but in freedom of will, chose sin, transgressed, and fell. But the second and higher representative of the race—Christ—not only recovers humanity from the fall, and restores it to the pristine position; He raises it higher than that original state, whose capabilities for perfection we cannot define, since the fact of fall excludes the development of the possible. The reasoning of St. Paul

in Rom. v., 12-21, conjoins Primeval and Christian Revelation, compares them, contrasts them, and asserts that grace is more potential than creation. "If through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." God's grace infinitely transcends man's effort, even when made under the most favourable conditions. High, then, as Primeval Revelation places man, Christianity places him still higher. There is not merely recuperation, but advance—not merely a flow from the ebb, but an overflow—a tide rising higher than it could ever have done under primeval conditions. What we have been, Primeval Revelation shews. What we are, experience knows: but "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

In Primeval Revelation man has acquired his special position. He is God-like. He is separated by a wide interval, an immeasurable distance, from all other terrene creatures, however high they may be in physical conformation. Our Genesis narrative next presents him to us as religious—as one who does not live by bread alone—but by "every word which proceedeth

out of the mouth of God." In short, the Genesis creational account leads up to that religious token of humanity, which is represented by the Sabbath.

4. The first Creation narrative closes with an account of the institution of the Sabbath. That the account leads up to this religious end, indicates the object for which the Genesis cosmogony is recorded, and bears out the contention for a primarily religious, didactic aim in *Primeval Revelation*—as well as in Scripture generally. The duty of observing the Sabbath is made to rest, not merely on a positive injunction. Its ground lies deep in the analogy of creation, and in the working of God. What benefits man is drawn from the fulness of God. Religion is interpenetrated by both the Divine and the human elements.

On no subject connected with Revelation has more ridicule been poured than on the six days of creation, as laying a foundation for the seventh day of rest. Admitting that the days of Genesis i. may be regarded as periods of indefinite duration, during which the Divine energy was specially operative—it is asked, How can days, which we enlarge to thousands of years, or any vast multiple of such thousands, found a reason

for a seventh day of rest, wherein day must be limited to its popular duration? and the otherwise allowable enlargement of the Genesis days is held to be proscribed fatally by the words of the fourth commandment itself, which seems to identify those days with natural days (Exod. xx., 8-11). But is the difficulty a real one? Is it necessary to regard the days in *v.* 11 as synchronous with the natural days unquestionably referred to in the rest of the passage? Is it natural to synchronise them? I say, Certainly not. It is obviously designed to draw man's duty out of God's example by likeness, or comparison, but not by exact identity. Man, like God, should work and rest, but man cannot work like God, because His working undergoes no pause or cessation. The work of God is, therefore, spoken of and described in terms accommodated to the conditions of man. The real correspondence is between the creative energy of God, and the infinitely more circumscribed productive energy of man. Though man is God's likeness, he is not God's equal. He is limited by far narrower conditions. Yet the likeness is not the less real. The type comes far short of the Archetype. It is as shadow to substance.

It is but a figure of the True. Yet not less real is the correspondence in the causality. "Human labour in producing is a symbol of the Divine act in creating. Man's repose is a figure of Godly rest. How long did it take God to create the world? Not so long in the Divine lifetime, as a week in man's lifetime. Grand as is the universe, vast as are its operations, many and various the inhabitants, the whole must be regarded by man as not so great a task to God as a week's work to himself. . . . Suppose that Moses meant—For six successive Divine days, in which moments are years, God's hand worked: on the seventh Divine day, not yet concluded (Heb. iv. 3-9), He began to rest. Let all holy men, as made in God's image, observe God's rule. Would not such a meaning add greatly to the force of the Divine command? In it is a moral measure for all time, and the key note of providential arrangements. In it is a peculiar majesty, specially suited to the growth of science; and the interpretation, now, affords proof of original inspiration. The sanctity and safety of the Sabbath are not shaken, but assured; built on truthful, not erroneous interpretation. . . . Our

“days, our weeks, our Sabbaths . . . are made
“holy and linked to God. We may liken them
“to a ladder set upon the earth, by which we
“may climb to heaven. They are as a pathway
“across the territory of time; one end vanishes in
“the past to possess the antiquities of God, the
“other is lost in the great world-times of the future.
“The sacred week has not yet been measured by
“science, as to its duration; nor comprehended, as to
“its work. On the use we make of our own day
“in it, depends our weal or woe in future life.”*

The matter therefore stands thus. There is a week of seven days, as the division of time. Six of these are for work, and the seventh is for rest. That was a fact then existing, and existing beyond the memory of man. No point could be discovered within man's history when it began to exist. How could it be accounted for? The reply is given in Genesis. It is made not a mere matter of temporal human expediency, though it is all that, but an essential part of the Divine economy. It is found in God Himself, is a part of the great accord with the Divine worker. It

* “The Supernatural in Nature,” p. 135, 136.

becomes not an excrescence upon the Divine system of the universe, raised up in time to be swept away in time, but a constituent feature of that Divine system, adjusted in its present form to man's present state, yet destined to be developed in a higher consummation in the future, according to that teaching of Scripture,—“There remaineth a rest to the people of God.” “Let us labour to enter into that rest.” Thus the first account of creation, the first stage of Primeval Revelation, leads up to the Sabbath.

We come now to the second section of the creation narrative. As in the first God is more especially set forth as the God of creation, so in this He appears, more especially in His relation to man, as the God of Redemption: the narrative prepares the way for that, and leads up to it. Here also we can almost do nothing beyond stating some of the principal particulars of a rich and suggestive detail. There is man's bodily constitution, formed of the dust of the ground, into which is breathed the breath of life, and man becomes a “living soul.” Then there is his localisation on earth, and the work appointed him to do. For if he was made

in the likeness of God, he must work as well as rest. Following this is the giving over to man, as it were, of the proprietorship and use of all that God made and provided for his service. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." But there is a reservation, a limit put to the exercise of the right so conveyed. A part is expressly withheld. "Of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat." Man is like God, but not equal to God. The supreme dominion of the Divine is set against the subordinate dominion of the human. The asserted prerogative of the absolute and universal proprietary right in God to give or withhold, brings into full relief the real position and relationship of Creator and creature. To the one belongs command. The duty of the other is submission. The submission of the human will to the Divine, if freely and fully rendered, could not fail to secure the richest spiritual good. Only by such submission could a living link of real and conscious connection be formed between will and will, mind and mind, heart and heart; between the feeble, dependent child, and the Almighty, All-sustaining Parent. Thus only could man be trained to his highest good. The breach of

this prohibition, the intrusion of man on that which God has reserved for Himself, must carry in it and with it, degradation, loss, and ruin. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The whole historical development of man's experience on earth corroborates the truth implied in the Primeval Revelation. Man is never so happy as when he denies himself, and never so free as when he serves. There is a great part for man to perform, but it must be within the bounds appointed him. Dominion is his, but in subordination to God. The harmonious combination of the Divine and human is alone perfection.

Then follows the teaching of Primeval Revelation regarding the social nature of man. He was not created or fitted for solitary existence, or even for exclusive communion with God. "It is not good that the man should be alone." The narrative proceeds to describe the formation of the woman from the man. In the first section it is simply said that God created man, male and female, alike in the image of God, and therefore, in the highest sense on a perfect level of dignity and worth. This has to be kept in view in the interpretation of the second account,

where the inferiority of woman, and her absolute subordination to the man, might seem to be implied. The two accounts are not inconsistent, but complementary, setting forth the whole truth in a most delicate and appropriate manner—the divine and equal dignity of the sexes on the one hand, and the relation of the wife to the husband involving a certain degree of subordination, on the other. It is very remarkable, and no mean evidence of the inspiration of the narrative, that such a philosophy of the relation of man and woman should have arisen in the east, where the inferiority of woman has from time immemorial been a fixed and absolute matter of faith. And at what a distance of time, and with what a closeness of correspondence, do the Primeval and the Final Revelations speak of this relation! “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” However, the leading idea expressed is that of the social nature of man, and his dependence on his fellows for the real and full enjoyment of life. “I will make an helpmeet for him,” a true helper, one of like nature and sympathy, a real counterpart, a kind of other self.

This section concludes by deducing the law of Marriage from the constitution of man's nature. Rightly regarded it is the foundation of all social happiness and wellbeing; it secures the good of man and woman, of the family, of society, of the world. Wrongly regarded it is fraught with evils, such as the history of mankind abundantly illustrates. That such a conception of Marriage should have arisen in a time and among a people accustomed to its violation argues a Divine original. Just as the first section closes with the world's Sabbath finding its full completion in the Eternal Rest, so does this close with the ordinance of Marriage, but with a looking forward to the union of Christ and His Church. Earthly things are shadows of the Heavenly.

The third Section of Primeval Revelation is contained in Genesis iii., and we shall treat, not of the formal machinery through which its action is presented to us, but of the substance of what it teaches. Certain undoubted facts, of the deepest import to man, demand explanation. In the world, as now existing, there is sin, suffering, deep moral degradation, physical and

spiritual pain. If man was made upright, how came all these to mar the beauty and wreck the happiness of that God-created world, where all was made very good. This section is the reply to that question.

It commences its tale abruptly. There is the temptation. This is almost the opening incident alike of Man's Primeval Paradise and of Christ's Public Ministry, but with what different consequences! In the one defeat, in the other victory, Then the conditions of the case required that the temptation or instigation to sin should be external to the tempted. Man was upright but not indefectible. His will was free. Nothing within himself would lead to the determination of that will to Evil. If it should be so determined, the influence must be from without.

True to the conditions of the case, our Primeval Revelation represents it to be so. The tempter is the Serpent—is outside of Humanity. The temptation is presented to the weaker—the more impressionable of the human pair, who yet are in a higher sense one. We cannot help comparing this with the temptation of our Lord. In the one the natural condition was defectible, in the other it was indefectible—"The

Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Then, there is the facile yielding in the one case, the Divine constancy in the other. The plunge is made. Shame follows the disobedient act, and the just doom is pronounced on all the actors according to the degree and nature of their guilt. As we might expect in a Revelation which deals with the "youth of the world," the terms in which doom is pronounced are very realistic, appealing to the sight and experience, but not thereby excluding the farther-reaching and more spiritual conception. The curse on the serpent borrows its imagery from the debasement of reptile life. The burden imposed on the woman is subjection to her husband, with the pains and sorrows of motherhood. The punishment denounced on the man is toil and labour in order to procure his subsistence: that which at first was a blessing, becomes now a burden and curse, only to be removed by the Gospel cure, which reconverts labour into a blessing and a dignity. A dark and dismal eclipse envelopes the earth and its human lord. Pierced, however, it is by one ray of light, the promise and hope of ultimate deliverance, the promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of

the serpent." This light was to become brighter and brighter as time rolled on. But the period for its full manifestation was not then. Man must bear his burden, until he has felt all its weight. The bitterness of sin must be tasted in order to his relishing the sweetness of salvation. So with a ray of light to chase away utter despair, the curtain falls on the Primeval scene, with exclusion from Paradise. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man ; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

1. These chapters of Primeval Revelation have furnished critical and scientific difficulties with reference to the Old Testament, not dissimilar to those of the Gospel of St. John in connection with the New. They have often been regarded as the weakest points in the two volumes. Eventually they may be found to be for strength. Indeed, even now, they have more than begun to be so.

2. This portion of Revelation is properly an intro-

duction to the great body of Revelation. That its value may be estimated, it is not to be regarded only by itself, but in connection with the whole body of Revealed Truth. If it be so, a wonderful consistency will be seen between them, with no more variation than the different circumstances of both would lead us to expect.

3. Every one knows how closely allied are the language and imagery of the first and last portions of our Holy Scriptures, how the expressions of Primeval Revelation pervade the whole record of Inspired Truth. But not only is this correspondence in language, it is also in thought. In Primeval Revelation truth is founded deeply in God and in man's relation to the Divine. It loses much of this deepness when man falls, but only to recover it when the Gospel of Christ unfolds the method of his restoration. The Sabbath of the upright man—God's image—degenerates on his fall into little more than a weekly rest from worldly toil, to expand again into that eternal rest which "remaineth for the people of God." The unfallen marriage relation sinks down to a merely temporal union for the purposes of time, but yet to be con-

summated in the union of His people with Christ, of the Bride-Church with the Heavenly Bridegroom. And the lost Paradise of Earth is more than restored in that Paradise of God, into which no tempter can enter, where there shall be no more curse, where God's face shall be ever beheld, where is no night, "and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

APPENDIX TO LECTURE II.

THE subjects which compose the Primeval Narrative scarcely admit of historical comparison with other accounts of an independent character. That is, we have no such checks on their veracity as are to be found afterwards when the statements of Bible History may be compared with independent narratives relating to the same events. In fact it is exceedingly difficult to settle to our satisfaction whether these records are intended to relate historical facts, or are merely dark sayings in which the conceptions of a primeval age have been wrapt up—whether they are History or Parable—how far they have a substratum of fact, and how much is the mere dress in which opinion is clothed. Their exceeding antiquity is undeniable. It follows from the correspondence between them and traditions of extremely archaic character among many other races. The inference seems irresistible that they have descended from a common origin. How far back that origin may be in the centuries of time no one can say

with certainty. A rude approximation, as doubtful as it is vague, is the utmost available. To form an opinion of their age from their present form is equally illusive. Among all the accounts of Creation, that of Genesis is the fullest and most cohesive. But it may be objected critically that this indicates a late rather than an early date for its composition. It can scarcely be denied that it is a *recension* of more accounts than one—a compilation of various narratives, in which critics fancy that they can discern the joinings. This at least may be said that the record is wonderfully continuous and consistent, and that, whatever we may think of it as a historical statement, it is characterised by a unity of sentiment, a loftiness of spiritual and moral tone, and an elevation of view, both in Theology and Anthropology, to which no parallel tradition can lay claim.

To give specimens of correspondence between the Genesis cosmogony and others of independent tradition—"The without form and void" corresponds to the "chaos" of Hesiod, the "*rudis indigestaque moles*" of Ovid. The first Creational account in Genesis opens with a cosmogony wonderfully similar to that of As-

syria, as recovered by George Smith, and to that of Persia, as preserved in the Visparad. The Assyrian account adheres closely to the Biblical. The very names show an affinity. There is the *Th'hom* (תְּהוֹם) of Genesis, which is the Tiamat of Assyria. After a lacuna the fifth Assyrian tablet gives the creation of the heavenly bodies—running parallel to the account of the fourth day of creation in Genesis. The fifth tablet begins with the statement that the previous works were delightful or satisfactory, agreeing with the oft repeated statement in Genesis after each act of creative power—"God saw that it was good." The difference between them is one of detail. The Assyrian account contains the statement of satisfaction at the head of each tablet, while the Hebrew has it at the close of each act. The Babylonian account also describes the moon as created before the sun. Hence it is obvious that the Genesis account is truer to nature. These specimens illustrate the similarities and dissimilarities in the two narratives.

The Assyrian account further agrees with that of Genesis as to the creation of man. The tablets are fragmentary, and concatenation must frequently be

guessed at. But the general tendency of the story is not uncertain. It contains a fragment of the address from the Deity to the newly created man on his duties to his God; and it is curious that, while in other parts of the story various gods are mentioned by name, here only one God is mentioned, and simply as "The God." The sentiments enunciated might belong to the purest system of religion. Only it would be wrong to ground an argument on a single fragment. The reverse of the tablet appears, so far as the sense can be ascertained, to be addressed to the woman, the companion of the man, and indicates her duties towards her partner.

The interest of the comparison lies in this, that, while the Bible narrative is complete, the Assyrian fragments are not so. So far as these exist, and are decipherable, they virtually agree. But there are many breaks in the latter.

To extend and correlate our view on the cosmogony narrative, the result seems to be that the western Asiatic nations, like the Aryans of the Vedic period in Central Asia, believed in the existence of a Being who dwelt alone before the existence of the universe.

The earth and heavens, according to the Asiatic cosmogonies, were created by the breath or spirit of this Being, giving life to the abyss of waters which formed the earliest material. Tiamat (the primeval waters), and Apsu (the abyss) brought forth the God of Love, the Father of the three Creators. In Phœnicia, Kolpeah (the voice of wind, the "Spirit of God,") and Bahu (the Chaos of Genesis) were the Creators of man. In Persia, the six days saw the heavens and stars, the waters and firmanent, the earth, the trees, the animals, and finally man himself, created respectively.

The first account speaks of man as created "male and female." The Rabbinical Commentators understood this to mean that man was originally androgynous—two bodies being united together, one male and one female. The idea is very ancient, and was firmly credited by Plato, while in the Persian mythology the original pair bloomed from a single stalk of the rhubarb plant, and were at first united together. The second account in Genesis makes woman issue from the side of man: "The rib which the Lord God had taken from the man builded He into a woman" (Gen. ii. 22, R.V., *margin*).

The story of man's happiness in Eden is widely diffused in the East. The Genesis account is closely approached by what we know of the Chaldean version of the story. The cylinder in the British Museum represents a tree round which a great serpent is coiled, while seated on opposite sides a man and a woman in Babylonish head-dress pluck fruit from its branches. The belief in a Paradise hidden beneath the earth was early expressed in Egypt. Two sacred trees stood in the dreary regions of Amenti, and from one of these—the sycamore fig—Nut, the Sky-Goddess, gives the water of life to thirsty bird-like souls. In India, two (or four) trees, of good and evil respectively, stand on the summit of Mount Meru—the Hindu Kush—where Kuvera, the God of riches, has his northern Paradise. These are called “trees of desire,” and are all ambrosial, resembling the Chaldean thorn tree sacred to the Goddess of love. The Persian myth approximates very closely to the Biblical story. The serpent seduces the first human couple to eat fruits which deprived them of their original happiness, and we find two sacred trees described,—one, the tree “of all seeds,” standing in the sacred stream of ocean ;

the other, the white Haoma, whence Ambrosia is distilled.

These are but samples of correspondences more or less related to the Genesis story. They might be indefinitely multiplied. The folk lore of races the most widely separated has a common origin and a common character. Modern study has correlated the accounts. Modern research in the field of Comparative Theology opens up paths into which many eager investigators are pursuing their researches, and pushing forward their theories. Were we discussing the question of the antiquity of the Biblical story, such lines would lead to the conclusion of its primeval date.

But why is the narrative placed in our Sacred Books at all? Not for information to gratify curiosity, but for edification, to teach lessons of high religious import. It is designed to be didactic, not informative. We may also note that, with all the similarities in the primeval Mythologies, they have developed very different systems. It is not the object which produces the impression, but the quality of the age that beholds and the mind that interprets,—“To the pure all things are pure.”

LECTURE III.

NOACHISM AND ABRAHAMISM.

SIN has entered into the world. The race of man has fallen from uprightness. The leaven of evil has corrupted his nature. His development must now proceed under new conditions ; it does so rapidly and increasingly—downwards. Speedily the malign results are seen in the fratricide of Cain. Increasingly they are displayed in the rising tide of wickedness, which at last wearies the patience of God, and terminates in the destruction of the race by the judgment of the Flood. The part acted by man, and the part of God, are manifest in this era of man's history, so compendiously, disjointedly, and yet suggestively described in the history of the race subsequent to the Fall, leading up to the Deluge. Without entering into detail, we may gather that this is a period of no small significance ; a period when man was left to develop his fallen nature,

just as the previous period showed the development of his unfallen nature. In his first upright, sinless state, he chose transgression and fell. In his fallen state, he follows the bent to which he first inclined. The downward course is with accelerated rapidity. From uprightness he falls into sin and corruption, and from sin he finally comes to destruction. Yet all the while man's human powers of advancement are in full exercise. He is no mere unthinking savage, living an animal life, caring for nothing but animal wants. He is not so degraded intellectually as to be little above the beasts that perish. He cultivates the arts that minister to the wants of civilised life. He builds cities, a fact which implies no mean advance from the savage uncivilised condition in which we find the more degraded portions of the race. The whole narrative points to no utterly degraded or debased state of humanity. Rather the contrary holds good. But there is one conspicuous omission in the antediluvian narrative, and that is the absence of any reference to religious means and practices. Whether such special means were in use or not, we shall not pretend confidently to assert or deny. Read in the light of after

development, there would seem to have been little such. We are told of only one religious ordinance—that of the Sabbath—more for the unfallen than the fallen man, the profound spiritual meaning of which may easily be understood to have been gradually effaced. We read also of Cain's and Abel's offerings—the only other religious practice which seems to be referred to; and it is doubtful what is its full signification. Apart from these there is no special religion, no Divine provision for supplementing, elevating, correcting the human bias. May we not then take this antediluvian age as one of those periods which predominantly illustrate the action of a principle always at work, viz., that in virtue of which humanity, not specially controlled, is enabled to shew what it can do, and what it cannot do. It is that period in the history of time, when man, fallen, yet with every advantage derivable from the fresh reminiscence of primeval dignity, competency, and purity, is left to work out his own fate, with no more restriction or control than what is afforded by that natural conscience, which is never absent from him until it is quenched by the advance of sin. Natural, unhelped good strives with evil. On a fair and favourable battlefield

the conflict is waged. No habit of evil has grown up. No deteriorating traditions exert their influence in excusing or palliating wickedness. Yet, what is the result? Rapid declension, final demoralisation, over the particulars of which inspiration draws the veil of oblivion. "God looked upon the earth: and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Long had the Divine forbearance borne with the rising tide of iniquity. But there are bounds even to Divine long-suffering. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." The flesh strove against the spirit. The flesh, with every natural advantage on the side of good; the spirit without any of those special means of grace, which were afterwards appointed. The historical result is a fearful commentary upon the theory which would leave humanity to its own bias, as if it contained within itself means of self-preservation and self-elevation. So quickly and completely does sin prevail, that in the issue Divine justice rises up to vindicate itself by an awful catastrophe, and to sweep iniquity from the world.

Again the race of man is represented by a few, saved like precious seed for another trial under varied

circumstances. Having tried humanity by leaving it to itself, the Divine pity now sees fit specially to interpose for its help—yet not more than is absolutely required. An educative process goes on—man must step by step realize his incompetency, before God intervenes to grant the needful aid. Consequently we mark a distinct period in Noachism. After the great judgment upon mankind had been executed, and when Noah had come out of the ark and returned to the usual habitudes of life, his first act was one of devotion. It was a recognition of God's supremacy, as against man's sufficiency. "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord." It is the first recorded instance of such an act. We meet with it often afterwards in Patriarchal and Judaic times. It seems a proof of Noah's conviction that humanism is insufficient; that man cannot lean on himself alone; that he requires a higher power to supplement his own deficiency—in short, that the Divine element is necessary to the perfection of the human. Noachism may thus be said to introduce the religious era, specially so called. If it achieves no remarkable success, it at least preserves from utter ruin such as the Flood.

Noachism is a transition stage from naturalism in its purer form to a modified supernaturalism. It partakes of the character of what precedes and of what succeeds. It is a new departure. As has been already noticed, it provides a religious external means for preserving the religious sense in man. As yet there is no Bible, but there is the Sabbath, however the conception of it may have deteriorated; and now, also, the service of God is instituted or re-instituted, in the sacrifice and altar. Religion is made a part of man's external life, so as to help and preserve the internal and spiritual religious sense. The idea is introduced which afterwards grew into Jewish ceremonialism, fencing every avenue to religious indifference by making religious observance a part of the routine of daily life—the same idea afterwards spiritualised in Christianity, which dropped the externals so necessary for the old times, dispensing with the shadows when the substance had come, and restoring under better auspices the state of things which we seem to see in the antediluvian era.

We mark the period as transitional in other respects. The Flood had rebuked that human confidence in the permanence of the present condition of

things, which implies reliance on the unvarying order of nature, which dispenses with a God, and which is Atheism, denying miracle or special Divine interposition. It is the feeling reprobated in the New Testament, the feeling as alive now as it ever was, when the scoffers of the last days say—"Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation," willingly ignorant of or wilfully ignoring the fact, that God did once interpose miraculously to sweep the race into sudden destruction, and that the order of nature, therefore, gives no indefeasible security against the foretold destruction of the world by fire. The Divine element is vindicated, yet the human element is conserved, in the Noachian covenant of the seasons. It is matter of human experience that these seasons do observe a regular succession. The Noachian covenant bases this, not merely on the laws of nature, but on the fiat of Deity. "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

Further, the conjunction of the human and Divine is manifested in the sacramental sign and pledge (as it

were) for this continuance and permanency in the natural world: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." Of course the rainbow existed before, and must continue to exist, while optical conditions remain the same. But the natural is called in to illustrate the supernatural. A special Divine meaning is associated with that which did not contain or suggest it before. We do not say that before this Noachian period there was no such relation of the natural and supernatural, but unquestionably that is here first made conspicuous which afterwards developed into the elaborate symbolism of the Mosaic ceremonialism, and which even in Christianity is preserved in the two sacramental ordinances, wherein the common matters of water, and bread and wine, are invested with a special religious significance, and the natural is linked by a special bond with the supernatural.

Another characteristic of Noachism may be noticed in the permission now given by God to use flesh as food. Its prohibition previously is only an inference from the way in which it is mentioned in the Primeval Revelation. Considering the lawlessness of the ante-

lation agree in their practice and permission. In spirit, hands are joined across the gulf which separates early and late periods of time. We see a Divine consistency even where human conditions seem to introduce temporary inconsistency.

Noachism is an interesting transitionary development. It closed an era during which fallen Humanism developed itself into Atheism. It introduced a period when Humanism, from a new religious start, developed itself into Polytheism. The former period was one of civilisation, city-building, art-advancement, and the carnal security of human self-sufficiency. The new period is that of the rise of empire, of human combination, when hand joined in hand thinks it may defy or frustrate Omnipotence. The former period has its sin marked by an overwhelming destruction. The latter period is no less distinguished by moral and religious declension, but the way of God therein is not by destruction but by reformation.

Primeval religion was for the whole human race. Adam was the representative of all mankind. The Noachian period is similar, yet with a forecast (in the foretold fortunes of his three sons) of privilege and

preference to some over others. As it were, man feels himself no more self-sufficient but assailable, and gathers himself up for defence rather than aggression.

Such is the general aspect of Abrahamism. It retires within a smaller circle. It initiates a narrowing process. In regard to the great promise and hope of humanity, doubtless the race-embracing application is still present, but it is in the background: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3); "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). General salvation is put into the background. The foreground is first occupied by Abraham personally, and then by one seed, Isaac, the seed of promise, who does not exclude, but include the seed Christ. And as the unfolding proceeds, the foreground is occupied by one family (that descending from the Son of Promise), by and by to grow into a nation, and finally, in a spiritual sense, to embrace all the nations of the world. There is contraction in order to ultimate all-inclusive expansion.

Abrahamism brings us within the period of history when there is at least a possibility of the inspired record being supplemented and corroborated by ex-

ternal information. As Revelation, in our view, specially and predominantly presents the aspect of events from the Divine side, it is all the more incumbent upon us to search for the human elements (little more than alluded to) which mingle in the action. And we shall freely do so, because the action is more brought down to the level of human interest, and we are enabled to feel that the circumstances are such as enlist our sympathy, and bear upon our condition. Before the purely Divine we tremble and stand in awe; in the presence of the more human (mingled with the Divine), we feel not less reverentially, but more naturally, more on our ordinary level, and therefore the conditions are more instructive, applicable, and edifying.

If we review the circumstances in which Abrahamism is introduced, they will be found to be to the following effect:—In the course of time, a great declension in religion had taken place. As before the Flood it took the form of Atheism, so now it assumed the form of Polytheism, in the land of Abraham's nativity, the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris—the Mesopotamian Valley. The researches of Assyriologists appear to

shew this beyond a doubt in the very earliest times to which the monuments carry us back. The Polytheism was most elaborate. At the head of the Pantheon stands the god Il or Ra. Next to him is a triad, Ana, Belus, and Hea, corresponding closely to the classical Pluto, Jupiter, and Neptune. Each of these is accompanied by a female principle, Ana by Anat, Belus by Beltis, Hea by Davkina. Then follows another triad, again accompanied by their female principles. And next in order to them is a group of five minor deities, representing the five planets—Nin or Nimp (Saturn), Merodach (Jupiter), Nergal (Mars), Ishtar (Venus), and Nebo (Mercury). These constitute what may be called the principal gods, after which are to be placed the numerous divinities of the second and third order.

This may suffice to shew the elaborate Polytheism of early Chaldea. Possibly there may have been esoteric explanations known to the priests and the learned, which, resolving the personages of the Pantheon into the powers of nature, reconciled the apparent multiplicity of gods with Monotheism, or even with Atheism. So far, however, as outward appearances were concerned, the worship was grossly poly-

theistic. In full accordance with information derived from the earliest monuments are the statements of profane writers. Nor is corroboration wanting in Scripture—"And Joshua said unto all the people: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac" (Josh. xxiv. 2, 3). Thus Abraham, as the champion of Monotheism, is the Protestant of the period.

Such, as we have attempted to describe it, was the religious condition of things. What was the political condition? For religion and civil policy can never be separated in that artificial way which has frequently been attempted. The position was this—Monumental records, and Scripture as well, testify to the rise of an empire in lower Mesopotamia. Many tribes and nations were brought under a common rule, whereas formerly they had a tribal independence. Beginning near the head of the Persian Gulf, this centralising

power gradually extended itself upwards along the Mesopotamian Valley. The necessities of such a political condition of things compel advance. Retrogression is fatal. There is no "Rest and be thankful." When aggression ceases decay begins. The episodical narrative of Nimrod (Gen. x. 8-12) evidently speaks of a growing, extending imperial power, which brings into subjection tribe after tribe, and adds territory to territory, annexing and consolidating what formerly were separate and independent elements. Now, we have seen that the religion of the dominant race was polytheistic, grossly so. The national or imperial religion was polytheistic. It was a political necessity to unify and consolidate so many discordant elements. No means were so obvious as that of imposing a common religious faith and practice. It may, therefore, be presumed that the national religion would be intolerant of those who differed from it. As a bond of imperial union, conformity would be required of all, since non-conformity was an element of national division and weakness. (Hence we see in Judaism afterwards the intention of a common national worship, although at a later period there was dissent on the part

of the kingdom of Israel from the religious practice and faith of the kingdom of Judah.)

Apply all these considerations to the case of Abraham, and we shall find him a representative example of such influences in all time. His religious convictions are diametrically opposed to those of the predominant race, to the imperial religion. If he would maintain them, he could not do so in his native land. His only alternatives are submission or migration—submission to the exacting fiat of imperialism, or removal to a locality where he might act according to his convictions. In far later times, when Christianity was introduced into the Roman Empire, Christians maintained their faith, and through suffering persevered in its profession and finally prevailed. Still later by far, the Pilgrim Fathers, like Abraham, migrated that they might enjoy the liberty of conscience which their native land denied. Mark then the conditions of the case—Abraham was either the conserver or the restorer of Monotheism as against Polytheism. Scripture does not seem to pronounce whether he was the one or the other. But the fact remains that he was the representative and champion of Monotheism. If he would

maintain his religious integrity, migration was the only resource. Whether the resolution to migrate was from a special Divine impulse, or from mere naturalistic motives, or from a combination of both, we need not dogmatically pronounce. Probably both elements were conjoined. Where men have eyes to see, the Supernatural and the Natural are seen to work in harmony and not in opposition. Presumably the Natural might preponderate, and in its view he might have clearly before him the destination which, in the second stage of migration, he wished to reach. This theory literally accords with the statement of Genesis xii. 5—"Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan: and into the land of Canaan they came." Or, supposably, he might, by the call of God along with the stress of circumstances, have only decided to migrate, leaving the course of the migration to be guided by circumstances yet to emerge. This supposition is in accordance with the tradition in Hebrews xi. 8—"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for

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an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went." Whither we adopt the one theory or the other, or the combination of both, the Divine and human influences are both perceptible, as actuating and conditioning the movement. The Divine motive acts through the human conditions. Of this we have an illustration in the course which the migration followed. If Ur is that city of Southern Chaldea which became an early seat of empire, his route was up the Euphrates, receding before the advancing power seated on the lower Euphrates. Resting for a time at Haran, probably beyond, or at least on, the confines of the territory subject to the Chaldean Empire, he at last resolves to remove to Canaan, taking the route by which all subsequent invasions from the East were conducted by Babylonian, Assyrian, Arab, and Turk. But, according to the narrative in Genesis x., the migration of Abraham to Canaan did not free him from contact with the Hamitic races, whose seat of power was on the lower Euphrates. The genealogy in that chapter describes the native tribes of Canaan as branches of that ethnic stem. Our information regarding their religious system is very scanty. How far they had

declined from true religion it seems impossible to ascertain. One thing we may confidently conjecture, that hitherto they had retained their independence, and were not confessed tributaries of the great Mesopotamian Empire, though for a brief period they did own subjection, and that they were in that state of civilized progress when they had a tribal constitution— independent of each other, yet, as occasion required, confederating for defensive rather than for aggressive purposes. There was at least no such centralisation of power as was even then attained on the lower Euphrates. Directly, they were secured from attack by the long trackless desert on their east, being assailable only by the circuitous route from the north, along the very same line which guided Abraham's migration, and was the route of all subsequent invasions of Palestine from the East.

Supposing then that Abraham and the Abrahamites retired before the pressure of a mighty power, leaving their original settlements in order to preserve their racial and religious independence, how were they bettered by the course which their migration took, or by the point to which it was directed, and in which for

generations it ended? The answer seems to be this. They were now among those who were not strong enough to suppress them, who were too divided to prove their destruction and yet strong enough to make them feel that they held their place by a precarious tenure. In Babylonia the contest was hopeless. The odds were too great. In Palestine the conditions were more equal. Still they required to walk warily. The consciousness of power was necessarily combined with the consciousness of weakness, and this furnishes a key to much of Abraham's history in the land of Promise, as well as to that of Isaac and Jacob—to their alternate boldness and submissiveness. Though for long it was to them the land of the stranger, it still remained to them the land of Promise. They ever preserved the hope of being supreme, where they were now only tolerated. By ways which they knew not God at last brought them to the realisation of their hope.

Another circumstance worthy of consideration is the special adaptation of Palestine for the occupation of a race which was destined to be the depository of religious truth rather than of secular power, and to perform so unique a part in the conservation and develop-

ment of true religion. While religion and nationality were inseparably conjoined, it was necessary that nationality should be placed in conditions favourable to its preservation. No country could have been better suited for such a purpose, especially in the circumstances of the times of old. It was naturally a stronghold, a country fortified by nature. It afforded singular advantages for defence, while it was as singularly destitute of advantages for aggression. Too small and secluded to be a menace to the world at large, it was wonderfully adapted to be the seat of a defensive position, giving every advantage towards the preservation of a national existence and independence, which embodied a great undying principle. We may find a parallel in Greece, hemmed in by sea and mountain, able to repel the Persian invasions from the East, and illustrious on account of the glorious memories of Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Salamis, through which that minute point of European geography was conserved as the locality where the human intellect was to be developed to its highest pitch. We may compare Palestine also with that almost equally secluded Italy, and that Rome on the banks of the Tiber, which was

destined to reduce a world to its obedience, to be the great representative of law, system, and order, amid the political chaos of a much later age, and to exercise, like Greece and Palestine, to the present day a potential influence in the affairs of the world. So much does locality enter as a factor into that which produces great and permanent influence on the history of the race.* May we not see the conjunction of Divine and human in the country chosen by Abraham for the object of his migration? We can hardly attribute the direction of his route to a far-seeing human prescience. Such a theory would involve an anticipation scarcely conceivable, even in the case of a far more advanced social and political experience than can be imagined possible at such a date and in such circum-

*We may be excused in pointing to a similar instance in the case of our native Britain, secluded from the vast world areas, from the European, Asiatic, African, American, and Polynesian portions of the globe, yet possessing world-wide influence, either directly, or through that Anglo-Saxon race, which seems fated to preponderate in the present and in the immediate future.—France cast out Calvin, and he became a citizen of Geneva. From that centre came Presbyterianism, a Church theory of no mean influence throughout the modern world—the old controversy being revived as between canonical Scripture with its impregnable support of Presbyterianism, and Tradition with its Episcopal development.

stances. Nor is the hypothesis tenable which would resolve the result into that of favouring human or natural causes. If the locality conditioned the future importance of the race which occupied it, why did the primeval Canaanites fail to fill the place which the Jews afterwards filled? Why did the Phœnicians fail equally to fill a similar position? They were not without enterprise. They predominated in the commerce which joined the Eastern and Western worlds in the remote historical ages. They gave letters to the first civilised nations of the European West. They spread their colonies along the Mediterranean shores, in North Africa, in South Europe, and in the Islands which lay between the two. If natural locality be regarded as the principal cause of national importance, then certainly they might have been expected to take the first place. Yet it was not so. They had all the advantages, and more, of the Abrahamic race, and yet their history closed in discomfiture, notwithstanding a long period of prosperity and promise. On the other hand the Jewish race, in spite of periods of fearful adversity, made its world-long mark on human history; and, even to the eye which sees nothing but the natural,

seems destined to perpetuation and a glorious consummation. What can adequately account for such a singular state of circumstances except the Scripture theory of a special Divine Providence? The problem which history presents, finds its only satisfactory solution in a Divine factor, working through, and by, natural or human conditions of themselves insufficient for the explication of the results attained or expected. Phœnicia, with all its local advantages, equal at least to those of the Jews, and with commercial sources of national wealth and prosperity superior to what they, a rural, agricultural race, enjoyed—Phœnicia ran its course, and underwent its decline and fall, long before Jewish nationality succumbed to the power of external foes. In the preservation of the Jewish nationality, through so long a period, and in its undying vitality as a religious representative, we must see the finger of Jehovah, the Divine element in the affairs of the world.

But, while placed in a situation thus affording security for national independence and religious freedom, the Hebrews occupied also a position favourable for resistance to, and protest against, the greatest systems of false religion in the ancient world—

Babylonian Polytheism on the East, Egyptian idolatry on the South, and Phœnician religious perversion with its propaganda, on the West. No doubt for many ages the position of the race was defensive rather than aggressive. The Abrahamic and Mosaic system of exclusiveness was adapted more for the conservation than the propagation of true religion; but as ages rolled on, and brought new terrestrial conditions in their train; as Europe began, under Alexander the Great and his successors, to assert predominance over Asia and the East; and as the world-embracing empire of Rome extended its bounds so as to bring all the civilized world under its imperial sway, the locality of Palestine emerged into more importance as a centre of religious influence. That influence was not so much now political as religious—a leaven which leavened the multifarious views brought into contact and collision, preparatory to that great fusion of which Christianity was the consummation, and of which Judaism was the pioneer. Can Epicurean fortuitousness satisfactorily account for this? The human conditions, as the event proves, were favourable to this result. But is the fact explicable

by merely human considerations? Was Abraham so prescient as to forecast this great and glorious development? Shall we find any sufficient cause short of the Divine?

The great interest of Abrahamism is concentrated in Abraham himself. His personality so towers aloft as to make us forget that he was the leader of a tribe, as well as the founder of a nation. He established no new system of religion. He laid down no code of laws. He gave forth no detailed expression of religious doctrine. He was no prophet in the after-meaning of the word. He was no herald or preacher, labouring to bring over others to his views, and seeking to increase adhesion to his party. But one great religious truth he did champion, the existence, the power, of the one living and true God. And that he championed by his life, by his migration. One grand religious principle or feeling he impersonated and emphasised, and that was faith. His knowledge may have been vague, indefinite, and scanty even in regard to the most elementary truths of religion. Scripture is silent, or almost so, as to the details of his religious knowledge. That he was far from faultless the sacred narrative does not

seek to conceal. Many blemishes marred the purity and uprightness of his life. But through all, and in all that is recorded of him, faith shines forth as his distinctive characteristic, sorely tried, sometimes stumbling, yet never failing to gain the ultimate victory. His faith soared no higher, perhaps, than the expectation of a temporal inheritance for his seed in the land where he wandered as a stranger, while Christian faith looks to an inheritance incorruptible and unfading. But none the less is he the person from whom a new start is made in the development of religion. As Adam was father of mankind, upright, and retaining the image of God even when fallen; as Noah was found true and constant when all besides proved degenerate, degraded, and ripe for destruction, so is Abraham the "father of the faithful." As such he is not only embalmed in the traditions of the East, preserving there an undying memory, but he is so also in the pages of Scripture as the prototype of that religious faith which reaches its climax in Christianity, and shall only pass away when it merges into vision. He is especially illustrative of a faith, which not only includes his own race, "whose were the promises" in

a special sense, but includes the Gentiles also—all the families of the earth. He is not only Abram, the lofty father, but Abraham, the father of the multitudes, “who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken,—so shall thy seed be.” He is, therefore, not the hero of a race, but the representative of all mankind, of all who shall rise from the ruins of the fall, and attain the dignity to which restored humanity is destined.

So representative, so inclusive is Abraham. Yet the only religious institution with which his period is associated, the covenant of Circumcision, points to a contrary, narrowing tendency. The circumstances of the time demanded separation and exclusion, required a wall of partition to be raised between the truth and the influences which might wholly have overwhelmed and obliterated it. Here we see the Divine influence working through the human, God condescending to take account of temporary conditions. Yet when God’s final intention is fully displayed, it is seen that means pass away, and the end alone remains. The temporary gives way to the eternal,

the old man is put off, the new man is put on, and all ends in the abolition of distinctions, preferences, and partialities. Primeval equality is more than restored, and human equality is raised to that higher level, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

diluvian period, we may presume that man used that unlawfully which is now accorded to him lawfully. It may be regarded as a temporary concession on the part of God to inveterate human habit, where no natural or essential ground existed to make it necessarily a sin; as when our Lord explains the grounds on which Divine authority seemed to countenance or permit a violation of the natural and Divine law of marriage—"Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." Of course there is no natural impropriety in the use of flesh for the food of man. The total (implied) restriction of primeval times and the partial restriction of Mosaism, are entirely removed by Christianity, at once the most Divine and the most human development of religion. It pronounces against all such restrictions—"Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." In Nature there is no prohibition. For a time, and for special reasons doubtless, abstinence was commanded; but, as we have seen in other instances, the first and the last stages of Reve-

LECTURE IV.

MOSAISM.

WE now come to consider the process of religious development from Abrahamism to Mosaism. In order to a rational appreciation of the new, it has to be regarded by comparison with the old. And this comparison must not be confined to the finished results of either. It must include the processes by which these are severally reached. Our subject invites us to contrast the outward conditions of Mosaism with those under which Abrahamism was formed. Only by following such a method can we form an intelligent opinion as between the one and the other. Only by such a method does the human mind accept satisfactorily the new position to which the old has led, and which becomes itself a starting-point for future development. The historical method demands continuity in the action. It puts us in a position to understand

the process by which the conclusion has been reached. We may accept a finished system, round, compact, and complete, apart from its historical evolution. But we accept it more rationally, and hold it more firmly, when we understand the process of its formation, and trace the course through which it has been reached.

Before considering Mosaism, therefore, abstractly and without reference either to its rise or its decline, we must view its historical preparation and the circumstances under which it came to pass. We must view it not only as completed, but as in process of formation. Thus only can we compass the general principle of a Divine and human co-operation, which we have sought to present as a leading idea in the treatment of religious development. Thus only will fall into their respective positions the human influence—variable, yet varying within certain limits, varying, yet recurring—and the divine operation, seeming to change, yet truly changeless, steadily through the ages working with unity of purpose towards its destined end.

The halting principle which solves historical variations by a polytheistic theory of many causes is supplanted by the Monotheism which can find a satisfac-

tory solution in one Great Cause, out of whom is evolved an infinite variety, while at the same time there is involved a perfect unity.

I.

1. We left religion in the Abrahamic, and now take it up in the Mosaic stage. How many years elapsed between the former and latter we shall not pretend to say, where chronological data are so uncertain. But there is no doubt about one fact, and that is—the chosen people were in the Abrahamic era a nomad tribe, and in the Mosaic they had grown into a nation. A vast change had come over their social condition. The process by which that change had come to pass need not be detailed from point to point. Historical Scripture furnishes a means of tracing it, and human experience outside of Revelation corroborates its probability. What suffices for a primitive, simple condition of society, does not meet the requirements of a more complex social state. The chieftain of a wandering tribe circumscribed in numbers, a sojourner among more settled tribes, who can move his tent from place to place, as the exigencies of a day or a season may

require—who can now be in Mesopotamia, then in Canaan, and then in Egypt—here or there, as the circumstances of the time may render it expedient—such a one is in a very different position from him who has to administer the affairs of a settled nation, no longer able to meet danger and straits by the simple resource of fleeing from them, but stationed firmly, and bound to encounter them without quitting the field. Conditions vastly altered suffice to account for the marked contrast between the simplicity of Abrahamism and the complexity of Mosaism. The family can be ruled without an elaborate code of laws applying to the minutest relations of life. The nation imperatively demands an elaborate system, pronouncing on the multifarious interests which have come into existence. The spirit which suffices for the family or clan would be found totally unsuitable for the nation. The progress must be made from personal authority to that of impersonal law or system. The advance must take place from the simple to the complex.

Thus, the difficulty which has been found in the sudden legislation of the Mosaic period is to a great extent removed. The impulse was Divine; the action

was anticipatory. There is a spontaneousness in it which enables us to accept it as a natural thing, while at the same time it is so unique as to imply the action of the supernatural. As a rule, it may be said that public law regulating the relations of complicated social life, is the growth of time, the outcome of long experience, the ripened fruit of time and trial. Thus it is that we have our statute and our common or consuetudinary law in church and state. Admitting the difficulty of accounting for the complex and complete legal system, social and political, which we find in Mosaism, we should, to lessen the difficulty, not only remember what has been adduced, the altered conditions of the Hebrew race, long grown up from a family to a nation, and passed from the nomad to the settled life, but also the fact that during the period of transformation they were in intimate connection with a people (the Egyptians) long civilised, among whom those complex social relations which national life implies had long existed and been the subject of legislation. Thus they had a model from which to copy, with the necessary and advisable alterations. Without for a moment excluding the Divine influence, there was a

human mould in which their institutes and institutions might be cast. God reveals His will to men, only as they are able to bear it. He goes before, but not so far in advance that they to whom He speaks shall lose sight of Him.

The family of Jacob were growing up in Egypt into a nation, and were gradually passing through a transition, of which Scripture gives no detail, and the progress of which we are thus left to imagine. They were a nation within a nation. Among them consuetudinary law must have grown up, accommodated to their gradually altered circumstances. Of that law Scripture records no particulars. We see it, not in its formation but in its completion. Yet a general survey of the position may lead us to the conclusion that not only a divine impulse, but also human circumstances co-operated in bringing about the final result. The Sinaitic and Wilderness legislation was Divine, yet not so wholly Divine as to eliminate all human considerations. Various provisions in the Pentateuch testify as much, such as that for the postponed celebration, in certain cases, of the Passover, and that for securing inheritance to females, under circumstances which must occasionally occur.

We have been pointing to the difference between the Abrahamic and Mosaic eras. The former was simple, the period of faith; the latter was complex, the period of law and system. The former was distinguished by an object of hope—vague, indefinite, temporal. The latter initiated the realisation of that hope. Faith, dim and undefined, upheld the Abrahamic Israelites during their unsettled wanderings. Jacob, in the passage from the old to the new, said, “Lord, I have waited for thy salvation.” Abraham—strong in faith, but dim in knowledge, seeing afar off, as through a glass darkly—was without possession of the inheritance; so were his son and grandson. Pass over more than a millenium. Privileges have been abused. Promises have been misconstrued. Christ came—was rejected. We find the race again cast forth on the world, scattered among the Gentiles. Yet in their unbelief now, as in their faith of old time, they preserve a nationality and manifest a permanency, which are among the most remarkable historical phenomena in the world, and among the most striking testimonies to the inspiration of Scripture. The hope of Abrahamism, and its narrowness, preserved the separate identity of

him and his, while as yet a wandering tribe in Canaan, and while growing into a nation, though in the bondage of Egypt. That hope was realised eventually in the possession of the Land of Promise. It was a true hope, if it was also essentially a temporal hope. The hope of a Messiah to come, of a temporal ruler and conqueror—a false hope, yet humanly combined with a special heavenly Providence—preserves a dispersed people as a distinct nation, perpetuates them, and to all appearance will continue to do so, until the veil is removed from their minds, and they shall recognise their Messiah in Him whom the nation rejected—until their hope shall be realised at last in their being brought into the fold of Christ with the fulness of the Gentiles.

2. Abraham was a majestic figure in the age justly called by his name. Moses is no less conspicuous in the stage of development which succeeded. In order to realise the true conditions of Abraham's period, we ventured to borrow information outside of inspiration. Nor shall we pursue a different method in the period now under review, while still employing the Scriptures as our principal and most reliable historical authority for fact and event.

Regarding Abraham's early personal history we have the most scanty information. Of the political and religious conditions of his native land we endeavoured to form a definite opinion, from all available sources, sacred and profane. From these we sought to realise the state of matters with which the inspired record deals, so that we might see the mutual action of the natural and supernatural, of the human and divine. As, then, the Abrahamic period is in a measure associated with Abraham's personality, so, in no small degree is that of Mosaism with Moses. But the parallelism of personality leads us rather to the future than to the past. That is, personally Moses may be much less suitably compared with Abraham than with Christ. Nor does Scripture forbid, but rather invite, the comparison. The great bond of union between all ages and stages of religious development is the promise of a Deliverer in primeval times, the seed of the woman; in Abrahamic time it is the seed of Abraham; and in Mosaic time the most important declaration of the nation's and race's hope is, in the words of Moses himself, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee,

of thy brethren, like unto me : unto him ye shall hearken."

Now externally the likeness between the two is great, even while the differences are marked and significant. Let us trace the similarity and the difference, as illustrating the interaction of the divine and human.

Of all the personages connected with the pre-Christian development, Moses most closely resembles the Christ. Not only in greater particulars does this hold good, but even in those abnormal and apocryphal legends which have gathered around the inspired and historical narratives of their life and mission. The Gospels (two at least of them) contain a few disjointed descriptions of the birth and infancy of Jesus. Then there is silence until he enters on his public ministry. So the Book of Exodus describes the wonderful incidents connected with the birth of Moses. In both the inspired narrative shews the special interposition of Divine Providence. The child Jesus is traced historically through infancy, till his miraculous preservation from the massacre commanded by Herod, then in the repose of Egypt, the return to Palestine, and the upbringing in remote, secluded

Galilee. There is no lifting of the veil which shrouds the Saviour's history after infancy, except the one incident of the visit to Jerusalem when he was twelve years old, until he formally presents himself as the long expected Messiah—the Redeemer and Consolation of Israel. How parallel to this is the Exodus narrative of Moses' infancy—equally adverse providences, equally providential preservation. The circumstances are too familiar to require recapitulation.

A distinction may be marked between the closing notices of the early history of the two,—the One, the carpenter's son, labouring at his father's trade, making ploughs and yokes (as Justin Martyr testifies) in meek humility—dignifying for all time honest labour; the other, the son of Pharaoh's daughter, brought up in the highest worldly position to which an Egyptian, native or adopted, could aspire. But then and thereafter descend on both alike equal darkness and silence, so far as inspiration is concerned, until the Greater is about thirty years of age, and the first in historic order is forty years old. Fancy and tradition have rushed in to fill up the blanks. In the greater case we reverently withdraw

from the sensuous conceptions, with which a carnal spirit has loaded the God-man's infant and youthful biography. In the case of the other we are not called on to be so exclusive, but may assume something of the history in the extra-scriptural independent traditions regarding the life of Moses, before he is presented to us in the biblical narrative as the divinely called actor in the deliverance of the chosen people from Egyptian bondage.

Chronology is so uncertain at this period that an argument can scarcely be hinged on a date. Taking the probable, where we cannot have the precise, for a guide, we gather that the period during which the immigration and exodus may most probably be held to fall was from B.C. 1867 to B.C. 1652, giving 215 years as the actual duration of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. So far as can be made out, this period included one of the most divided conditions of government in Egypt. Before the 18th Dynasty (B.C. cir. 1525), we have nothing like detailed or continuous history of the various Egyptian dynasties, and particularly there is almost an entire want of monumental record regarding the 15th and 16th Dynasties, viz.,—

those of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings. The two dynasties of Shepherds, with a mixed Theban and Shepherd dynasty (the 17th) lasted, approximately, from B.C. 2080 to B.C. 1625. Remembering that all dates and chronology of this period are constructive and conjectural, the general conclusion may still be considered as very probable that the government of Egypt at this period was divided and distracted. If so, the political situation was favourable for the vindication of their liberties by the enslaved Israelites, and would naturally suggest attempts in that direction. If the bulk of the people bare their burdens patiently, and without a thought of endeavouring to improve their state, at least some of the better spirits of their nation would entertain aspirations after deliverance and freedom. Even two centuries can hardly have extinguished utterly the instinct of liberty which possesses the nomad mind. If we read between the lines of Scripture, we shall find no ambiguous corroboration of such a supposition. The subtle and unscrupulous policy of destroying the Israelitish male children, entered upon by the Pharaohs before the birth of Moses, points in this direction. The mission of his elder

brother obscurely alluded to in Exodus iv. 14, when he went from Egypt to Midian, seems significant of concerted action. Without straining the text we may conceive Aaron as a messenger from those of the people who could be trusted to carry out a policy where failure was ruin—from those of the people who could conceive the idea of national freedom, and who were impelled to summon to the cause the instruments most likely to be efficient. Even the first offer of Moses to lead the national movement (as we suppose it to be) points towards the same conclusion. Forty years before the period of Exodus he offered himself to the people as the vindicator of their liberty, or at least the lightener of their bondage. If there be any truth in extra-scriptural traditions (and there is no good reason to discredit them), the rejection of Moses when he first presented himself as the national deliverer is humanly quite intelligible. He had been brought up an Egyptian. He had led the armies of Egypt to victory in Ethiopia. He was identified with the oppressing race. He was, therefore, distrusted and rejected. All this is natural. And equally natural is the turning of the national hope towards the exile, who had

descended from the steps of a throne to the menial occupation of herdsman, who possessed qualifications which no other individual of the nation possessed—literary culture, political experience—and who had also purged himself (as it were) from all the disqualifications which led to his first rejection. He whose honesty might at first be doubted is now in a new position. Suspicion of complicity with the oppressors could no longer attach to him. He had finally and long broken with Egypt. He was now more like one of themselves, and thus more likely to inspire their confidence and obtain their adherence. If we could recover with certainty the exact position of political affairs in Egypt at that time, a flood of light would be thrown upon the human circumstances attending and promoting the Exodus. Such light would in no degree derogate from the influence of the Divine element in connection with this remarkable event, but would shew the co-operation of the human conditions, in and through which Divine Providence acted.

3. The development from the Patriarchal to the Mosaic stage is significantly marked by the statements in Exod. vi. 2, 3—“And God spake unto Moses and

said unto him: I am the Lord, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty (El-Shaddai), but by my name of Jehovah was I not known unto them;" and Exod. iii. 13, 14—"And Moses said unto God: Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses: I Am that I Am, and He said—Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you."

Nothing is more significant of development in religious views than such change in the name of Deity, or such new prominence given to the attribute which the name expresses. The Divine perfection of Omnipotence was the favourite and usual appellative in Patriarchal times, and naturally so. Their position as strangers, the natural jealousy of the native races, and the consciousness of their own weakness, led the Israelites to dwell on the strength of their unseen Protector. Now they are a nation. They are encouraged to look forward to a long history in the future. They are power-

ful enough to ward off aggression. The national hope would fix itself on permanency, and so, that idea of the Divine One which expresses His unchangeableness—His fidelity to covenant and promise—would attain a prominence greater than before. There remained but one other great stage in religious development, which was reached when Christianity was promulgated, and when the Divine conception was formulated by the beloved disciple in the phrase “God is Love.” “God is mighty,” would bring strength and courage to the soul of the nomad. “God is faithful” would carry a glow of security to the heart of the nation. “God is Love” fills with joy unspeakable the breast of the Christian.

II.

Passing now from means, ways, and signs—from an external view of Mosaism—let us study it as it presents itself in its essence.

1. Like the Abrahamic period, with its ordinance of Circumcision—the sign of that separation from the world and of dedication to God, which marked the exclusiveness of religious development—the Mosaic period is distinguished by the ordinance of the Pass-

over, commemorative of deliverance from bondage and plague. We must not omit to notice that this ordinance is the only one of the complicated Mosaic Ritualism which passed over to Christianity, changed indeed in form and enlarged in meaning, yet still not so altered but that the general correspondence is preserved. Circumcision first marked separation from the apostate races of mankind and union with the now chosen race of Abraham. Its Christian analogue rises to the higher spiritual conception of separation from sin, engrafting into Christ, and sharing in the privileges of that great family in heaven and earth, of which He is the Head, and believers the members. The conception of the Christian Passover equally rises above that of the Jewish. It signifies and seals deliverance not merely from temporal bondage, but from the dominion of sin and corruption, and our admission into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus as we go down the stream of time, and as Revealed Religion unfolds itself to our view, we are incited to think of it, not so much as recovering the lost and better past, but as looking forward to the better future. Our thoughts

travel not backward to primeval happiness—the golden time of the world's youth—but forward to that glorious consummation which is initiated by Christianity, and which prepares for “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The law was not a reminiscence of the past, but a shadow of good things to come (Heb. x. 1). It sets our faces still forward.

2. Mosaism was a system, elaborated to meet every conceivable case, and to regulate all the relations of man to God and to his fellow-man. It carries out great principles to the minutest detail. Now, one part of Mosaic legislation stands by itself, we mean the Decalogue—the “Ten Words.” It involves a great principle, viz.:—that privilege is inseparably connected with duty. The foundation charter of the new relation between God and His people is based on the solemn moral foundation of the Ten Commandments. Although laws—ceremonial social and political—were promulgated with great minuteness of detail, yet these moral precepts, this moral summary, was recognised as occupying a position different from and higher than all the other legal provisions. It was the first to be proclaimed. It is the basis on which the

others repose. It was unchangeable : they might alter.

The only apparent exception to this inherent and unchangeable obligation — unchangeable while God and man are as they are—is the Fourth Commandment enacting the duty of observing the Sabbath—the middle term, the keystone of that arch which bears up in the Decalogue our duty to God and man. Much ingenuity has been expended in shewing the meaning and significance of this exception ; especially has it been adduced as a remarkable testimony to the duty of observing the Sabbath, that an institution liable to alteration in details should be assigned to a central position in a code of unchangeable obligation. All this is quite legitimate. But does the Fourth Commandment require any such excuse for the position it occupies ? In dealing with Primeval Revelation, we pointed out how the first creation narrative leads up to the creation of man, and past him to the institution of the Sabbath, raising him, as it were, to the highest level, illustrating his likeness to God in work and rest, foreshadowing an eternal Sabbath of which the Sabbath of time was but the faint forecast. On this

ground we decline to regard the Sabbath Commandment, in its highest spiritual sense, as any exception to the unchangeableness of the moral law contained in the Decalogue. Moses, the legislator, needs no excuse. "The foolishness of God is wiser than man." If the Fourth Commandment, in its Decalogue wording, has a flavour of earth and time, it has such in common with the Second Commandment, which essentially prescribes how God is to be worshipped acceptably, and yet utters its warnings against the contrary in language suggested by the circumstances of the Israelites at a time when they had been newly separated from the gross idolatry of Egypt.

In the Decalogue we have the first formal recognition of relative duties as co-important with those due directly to God Himself. There is clearly implied what our Lord so pointedly taught, that the first and great commandment of the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God," &c., and that the second is of co-ordinate importance with it—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In the Decalogue is the germ of that which Christianity fully unfolds. "This is the commandment which we have from Him, that he who

loveth God should love his brother also." "He who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Burckhardt has remarked that the code of the Beni-Israel is the declaration of the indivisible unity of morality and religion. And long before his days, Josephus expresses himself to a similar effect, boasting that whereas other legislators had made religion to be a part of virtue, Moses had made virtue to be a part of religion. For a Jew and a Pharisee of his period, Josephus made no mean approach to the Christian conception of the relation between religion and morality.

3. The Mosaic ideal, then, drew not only religion, but morality and relative duty, out of God, placing the latter not on grounds of expediency, but on the eternal basis of the Divine. Its theory was that of interpenetrating with religion man's daily social life, the administration of public affairs, and the whole circle of human conduct in the world. It carries religion into his action not only as a worshipper, but as a man, a husband, father, master, servant, and as a citizen—into his public as well as individual and social life. It takes care of him, and guides him in

everything. We mark how it treats him almost as a child, incapable as yet of mastering great principles, able only to follow explicit details.

In this respect Mosaism is in striking contrast to the simplicity by which it was preceded in the Patriarchal, and followed in the Christian era. Though the heir of the glorious promises, Israel was yet as a child, under tutors and governors, until the time appointed. The law was his "schoolmaster to bring him unto Christ." And this principle is developed in all the legislation with which the Mosaic period is identified.

4. The ceremonial laws enter into minutest detail. Morning and evening, daily, weekly, monthly, annually on the great festivals, and at the still longer cycle of the jubilee, the Israelite is taken by the hand, reminded of his duty, constrained to it, has it made an habitual part of his ordinary life. What could be a greater contrast to the almost entire absence of such religious incentives (we were almost going to say, mechanical incentives to religion) in the previous Antediluvian and Patriarchal periods! In these earlier periods man declined into utter religious indifference, or worse, into absolute atheism, foolishly saying in

his heart, "There is no God," and still more foolishly acting as if there were no God, filling up the cup of iniquity, until the full cup of judgment had to be drained to the dregs. In the Mosaic period (including therein the Judaic, which wrought out practically the Mosaic principles) it was different, and yet we hesitate to say that it was better. Formalism took full possession of the Jewish mind—or of that portion of it which made the highest profession of religion. The most vehement denunciations of the gracious Saviour—the dark shadow to the light of His love for the erring and sinful—are launched not against the godless Sadducees, but against the hypocritical Pharisees.

The education of mankind was going on through the ages, for a long time with little, and again for a long time with much provision for his religious needs. The result of neither process was favourable—in the one case irreligion, pure and simple; in the other formalism, hollow, hypocritical, hateful. Does Christianity, ceremonially considered, hit the happy mean? Perhaps so; but certainly not unless we take into account that Divine factor, the Holy Spirit, the vivifying principle of Christian religious means. As He was the energis-

ing principle of creation, so He infuses life into the dead. We may have all the form and outward seeming of Christian life, but "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;" "As many (only) as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

5. Religion was not only carried into its own sphere (strictly so called), but into all the details of private and social life. It regulated every relation in which man could stand to man socially—the relations of parent and child, of husband and wife, of master and servant, of citizen and stranger. It prescribed with the utmost minuteness laws of property, of debt, and of taxation. It had its criminal code distinguishing crimes against God and man, and assigning the punishments proportioned to the offences. It included also judicial and constitutional laws bearing on the administration of justice and on civil government, on the functions of local judges, and the duties of supreme rulers. It extended to every conceivable case which might arise in a settled state of society. Its complexity meets at every point the complications involved in an advanced social condition. It was the greatest possible contrast to the simplicity of the preceding Patriarchal

era, so destitute of detail, and no less a contrast to the succeeding Christian stage of development, when all detail (almost) is dropped, and a few terse but pregnant maxims sum up the pages of precepts in which Mosaism regulates the conduct of man. Ceremonialism is dismissed with the maxim—"Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father: God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." Places, modes, times, rites disappear into the darkness out of which Mosaism temporarily called them. The vast variety of social injunctions are compressed into a sentence in the Gospel of Christianity—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." The public duties of the citizen to the commonwealth, of the subject to the ruler, who is pronounced to be the ordinance of God, are no less tersely set forth—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"; while an Apostolic maxim suggests that our citizen aim as Christians should be to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," conjoining the two principles of duty to God and to man.

6. Mosaism appears to separate, but really does not separate, the Divine and human. Like some great river which flows downward in one channel, and then in its course ramifies into many for a time, but reunites these temporary branches into one stream before its waters are poured into the ocean, so the single, simple stream of primeval and patriarchal religion divides itself in Mosaism into many branches, to be reunited by Christianity into one great current, bearing on its bosom the fortunes of the race through time into eternity.

The race was undergoing a particular course of education—the minute in detail as against the general in principle, the code as against the life, the letter as against the Spirit. Mosaism was the lowest descent towards man. It put its arms under him to bear him up. It took him by the hand, firmly, to lead him on a right way. Its successor rather drew him than drove him. It did not so much shout in his ear, “Do this and live,” “Do that and die.” The Gospel is the law of love and not of ordinances. The Gospel brings us back to the Abrahamic era of faith, as the great inspiring principle of human conduct. “This is the

work of God, that ye believe on Him whom God hath sent." Man is thrown back on himself, enlightened by the Word and inspired by the Spirit. Identified with Christ, imbued with His spirit, he receives a spiritual life and perception from the second Adam, analogous to, but higher than, that natural life which he derives from the first Adam. Life comes from the one, quickening from the other.

LECTURE V.

JUDAISM.

JUDAISM is the development of Mosaism, the carrying into practice, through a long historic period, of the principles laid down in the Mosaic system. Reviewing the whole religious history of the world, we may, without violence of imagination, discern a triad division, somewhat like the dual triad division of the six creation days, in which the first, second, and third days, respectively, supply a preparation and basis for the work of the fourth, fifth, and sixth. The first member of that triad is Primeval Revelation, with its outcome in Patriarchal Religion ; the last is Christianity, whose history is to include all ages to the end of time ; the middle term is Mosaism, with its issue in Judaism. Thus, Primeval Revelation unfolds itself practically through the Patriarchal period. Special revelation is then com-

paratively scanty and feeble. With the least possible Divine interposition, man is left to work out his own destiny, and, by long painful experience, it is demonstrated to him that his own unaided or slightly aided powers are unequal to the task of self-preservation from moral deterioration and religious decay. The whole world was sinking or had sunk into idolatry and godlessness, when God snatched one witness to truth from the universal error. Adam was the progenitor and representative of the whole race. But the whole race descended from him sunk lower and lower, and are swept away with sudden and universal destruction. Only Noah and his family are preserved, to be in a sense the progenitors of a new world. The result here was as disappointing as before. All the races and tongues of earth speedily declined from the knowledge and service of the one true God. The cure for this crying evil is not, as formerly, destruction. But, while the world in general is allowed to go on in the way which men perversely chose, a new father of a peculiar race is separated from the rest of mankind. Abraham is called to be "the father of the faithful." The Divine operation is restricted, as it were, to

a portion of the race, few in number, mean in culture, insignificant in power, yet destined to grow into a nation, and still more to find its hope realised in blessing all the nations of the earth. To this chosen people the special grace of God is confined. To them is vouchsafed special privilege and superintendence.

1. In Mosaism there is a great outburst of Divine energy, unprecedented fulness of Revelation, giving Divine direction on all points of morality, worship, and ceremonial, of private, social, and public duties, in every conceivable condition in which man is required to act. Judaism is the complement of Mosaism. It is Mosaism applied. It has its long historic period of more than a thousand years. It, too, fails. For surely that has failed which has not succeeded in preserving its own privileged race from general declension, both morally and religiously, and still less in recovering the other races of the great human family, and in accomplishing its own promise and hope of being a blessing to all the families of earth. Then comes the Christian Revelation, occupying, like Mosaism, a period brief indeed, but one of intense spiritual energy and revelational force—of such energy and force that there is

almost no parallel, certainly no equal. A few years—not more than 70—cover the duration of Christian Revelation, but the whole succeeding ages of time shall be the practical commentary on it. Its distinctive features and its probable effect are our next subject, and need not here be entered upon. What has been said is only to shew in what light we are to view Judaism, viz. :—as the historical and practical working out of Mosaism.

2. Judaism continued for almost a millenium and a half. We are often inclined to think of it as undergoing little transformation during its whole period. But this is a mistake. The Divine guiding principle did not vary sensibly, but the human circumstances through which that principle operated did vary most materially. Judaism illustrates the application of a general principle, not to one state of circumstances only, but to many. As we might expect of a Divine experiment, all possible conditions were exhausted. The circle to which the action was confined might be narrow, but the variety of circumstances was great. To pass by the era of Joshua and of the final conquest of the promised inheritance, as virtually

included in the Mosaic period, we have great variation of conditions in the ages which followed before the course of Judaism was run. (1) There is the period of tribal confederation, *i.e.*, the period of the Judges. (2) The period of the kingdom follows, when the whole nation owned a common rule, the period of centralisation, that of Saul, David, and Solomon, comparatively short, but almost vindicating for itself a spiritually independent position from its exceptionally spiritual activity and importance. (3) Then there is the division of the national unity into twain; the kingdom of Judah professing whole-hearted adherence to Mosaism and Jehovah, that of Israel giving only a half-hearted adhesion. Each furnishes a fertile field for the study of spiritual action. The revolted kingdom first comes to an end, and disappears into dark oblivion. Its lost tribes figure no more either in sacred or in profane history. The continuity of the nation is preserved only in that fraction of the race which stood firmly by the family of David. (4) How various are the experiences through which this survival of Judaism passed—the long captivity of the people in a foreign land, the restoration to their country and a qualified temporary

independence, their subjugation under Alexander the Great and his successors, the national uprising under the Maccabees, and the revindication for a time of their national independence, with the confused and complicated political changes, issuing at last in the Roman rule over the nation !

These changes, great and small, furnish ample variety of conditions to illustrate the practical working of Mosaism in the history of Judaism. In a narrow sphere, that of Jewish nationality, and in a limited period, they illustrate what shall take place in the larger field of the world, and in the longer period of time, which applied Christianity shall cover.

3. Coupling Mosaism and Judaism together, in what respect did they differ from the preceding and subsequent periods of development? One peculiarity distinguishes Judaism from the Patriarchal and Christian periods. It was the period of Prophetism in a special sense. It began with the first of the prophets in Moses, and ended with the last of the prophets in the Baptist (for he is linked more to the past, as being the second Elias, than to the era of which he was the forerunner). Divine com-

munications were given as occasion required in the previous period. But the combined Mosaic and Judaic period is specifically distinguished by a prophetic character. Scripture links and yet discriminates the two stages of the period as those of the law and of the prophets. In short, there was not only in Mosaism a time of exuberant revelation, of special Divine inspirational energy, but through the greater part of Judaism there was a continuous revelational influence—Samuel, David, the occasional prophets of whom we read in the historical books of the Old Testament, and finally those greater and lesser prophets of the latter days of the kingdoms, whose writings form a component part of the Old Testament canon. Thus, in this middle period of religious development, there was not only an initial stage of revelational energy, but a sustained activity of the same, stronger at some times and less strong at others, yet permanent in its operation.

4. How does Judaism historically and practically illustrate the success or failure of Mosaism? and first as regards religion strictly so called. Mosaism provided an elaborate system of religious means, constantly

reminding the people of their duty to God by calling them constantly to religious services. These external acts of devotion kept in their view their religious duty, so far as such means could lead towards such an end. The historical facts of Judaism must decide whether the means accomplished the end or failed. There can be no doubt that they failed. Regard Judaism in the Wilderness period, and make all allowance for the exceptional circumstances of the position, it still seems clear that the Ceremonial Law was then but imperfectly observed. The rite of circumcision was wholly neglected, and mention is made of no more than one celebration of the Passover (Num. ix.). Yet these ordinances were really the most important of the Mosaic economy, the most significant, and, under varied form, of perpetual significance and observance. It is remarkable that the celebration of the Passover is only seven times noticed in the whole Scriptures, from its first observance in Egypt to its last observance by the Lord and his disciples on the eve of His sufferings. The second instance (in the wilderness) has already been mentioned. As to all the other recorded instances, it is notable that they were on occasions of special religious

revival or interest. Thus a celebration took place under Joshua at Gilgal (Josh. v.), on which occasion it is said, "The Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt," obviously pointing to a prior negligence in religious observance, and an awakening to the duty which Mosaism prescribed. Then, many centuries afterwards, the observance is recorded in connection with the Reformation of Hezekiah. A century later, in the reign of Josiah, a great reformer and persevering restorer of true religion and of Mosaism, the celebration of the Passover is again described, and in terms which plainly convey the idea of long and habitual previous neglect. The only other intermediate allusion to the observance of this religious ordinance is in the days of Ezra, also a period of great importance in the history of Judaism, when the Jews were permitted to return from long captivity to their own land, and to restore their city and religion. Without discussing the circumstances under which these celebrations of the Passover were held, the narratives certainly produce the impression that its observance was exceptional and not regular or habitual. The marked absence of allusion to such observance during the golden age of

Judaism, the era of David, is indeed suggestive, and the more so from the fact of that king, hero, prophet, and psalmist, organising the Tabernacle (the model of the later Temple) worship, by distributing systematically the duties of those who were officially set apart for the discharge of such functions.

No doubt in an age not long subsequent to that of Ezra, who is generally regarded as the compiler of the Old Testament canon, Mosaism, in all its minute detail, came to be the national practice; and an oral law, supervening, began to multiply as well as enforce the observances which Mosaism prescribed. A very curious contrast is suggested by this fact between the outcome of Mosaism and of Christianity. Mosaism, with its elaborate detailed prescription of ceremony and ritual, fails for long to be reproduced in Judaic practice. The letter of specific injunction gives place to the spirit of simplicity and abstraction. On the other hand, Christianity, with its severe ceremonial simplicity, speedily develops an elaborate ritualistic observance of ordinances, certainly of man's invention, or in the spirit of a Jewish restoration. Mosaic complexity and Christian simplicity were alike Divine. Judaic neglect

of externals and Christian multiplication of rites and observances were alike human. Can any account be given of such phenomena? May we not suggest that, as Mosaism in its complexity was suddenly introduced in the period of Patriarchal ceremonial simplicity, the old habit so far neutralised the new influence. The latter could come into full action by slow degrees only. Time and circumstances were required for its development. Then, by way of parallel, the simplicity of Christian ceremonialism, in fact, the Christian extrusion of ceremonialism, was proclaimed abruptly in an era and to a people saturated with ritualism, externalism, elaboration of observance. The force of habit made men slow to accept the new reformation. Consequently the first and most formidable foe of Christianity was Judaism, of whose injurious influence we have abundant testimony in the New Testament Scriptures, as well as in the increase of observances when Christianity began to develop itself more independently of the previous dispensation. To the simplicity of the Gospel ritual is gradually added a detailed and complex ritualism. Seasons and symbols are recognised and multiplied, while spirituality decays. Eventually the

true Christian principle begins to assert itself, and simplicity of Christian worship is sought to be restored. The details belong to the history of Christianity, and not to our present subject, except in so far as a historical parallel necessitates allusion to the subsequent, in order to the illustration of the precedent.

5. Mosaism had not only its religious but its political side. Yet the two aspects can hardly, in its case, be dissociated, since there was such a coalescence of the religious and civil, that they seem to be inextricably commingled. The development is wrought out in Judaism. There is a reminiscence of the past, as well as a shadowing forth of the future. The practical rises into the ideal, and the ideal seeks its realisation in a practice still higher than that from which its origin is derived.

The Theocratic idea was a reminiscence of the past, at least was illustrated in the past. The chief was also the priest. Civil power and sacred function were united in one person. Such was the case throughout the patriarchal period. Noah, Abraham, Melchisedec, were kings and priests of their tribes and races. But the family widens into the nation. The chieftain

develops into a king. The human conditions rise through the Divine impulse above themselves. And so Mosaism introduces the notion of a Theocracy. The term is first used by Josephus, but although so late in time, it is not inapt: "Our lawgiver had no regard to any of these forms (monarchies, oligarchies, democracies), but he ordained our government to be what by a forced expression may be called a Theocracy." (C. Apion, ii., 17.)

The old tribal conception of a chief is etherealised, while it yet retains much of its mundane associations. The visible ruler fades away, and in his place comes the Invisible Ruler. The chief is supplanted by God. The visible personality is swallowed up in the Invisible Divine Personality of the Theocratic Sovereign. Yet it retains so much of its earthly origin, as to have its Tabernacle in the centre of the camp, as afterwards its Temple was the centre of national life and the bond of national unity. The human and Divine intermingle, with yet a soaring above what is merely human, and an aspiration towards what is purely Divine. The Mosaic conception was grand. How did Judaism carry it out? In its first stage, under the Judges, the commonwealth

had no visible head. "There was no king in Israel in those days." Alas! that it should have to be added, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There was independence of all human or visible control. It was the perfection of individual liberty. But did civil peace prevail? Did religious prosperity flourish? History testifies to the contrary. The nation loudly demanded a king, that it might be like the nations around it. The seed of a great truth had been planted, but as yet it could not bear fruit. Then a king was provided—Saul, a figure belonging to the heroic order, more akin to the Judges who had passed away than to the dynasty which followed; a man in whom we see the unique mingling of past and future, of great qualities and wretched littleness, of Divine strength and human weakness.

Saul is succeeded by David, in all respects his contrast and superior, great alike in his virtues and in his vices. With every drawback, David is adopted as the best symbol and type of the Theocracy, a king who ruled in the fear of the Lord, who acknowledged his subordination to the unseen God, and who was accepted as the visible impersonation of that invisible Theo-

cracy which Mosaism had enunciated. In his descendants the Theocratic idea was to be carried out in perpetuity. "There shall not fail thee a man to sit on the throne of Israel." Never did this hope pass away from the mind of the people. Centuries afterwards, in the decaying and perishing state of the Monarchy, it is recalled by Jeremiah (chap. xxxiii. 17). Only, its temporal realisation had then been given up for lost, and the hope of the Prophet is turned to a more spiritual future. There the old confidence could find itself realised under new conditions. The old Word of God would receive a new interpretation. "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called—The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16.)

As Judaism went on, the Theocratic idea became more earthly. The Theocratic King was more fully unfolded in prophetic description. His attributes became more Davidic and Solomonic; *i.e.*, the prosperous was emphasised to the exclusion of the adverse. The

light alone was seen. The shade was put out of view. Therefore, when Christ came, the nation rejected Him. Men could not penetrate through the veil which concealed His glory. The blindness was in their own eyes, and not due to the gloom which encompassed the fleshly manifestation of the true Theocratic King. And so Judaism, which was to work out the Theocratic idea, failed to comprehend it—utterly missed it. Yet that did not stop its development. As at first it was a soaring from earth to heaven, so in its last and fullest display, our Saviour said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” It is something better, higher, nobler, divested of earthly attributes, and raising hope above what is seen and temporal, to what is unseen and eternal. Judaism here also failed.

Christianity succeeded. It supplanted the terrestrial notions which weighed down the popular Jewish conception of the Theocracy. It conceived its Theocratic King as Head over all principalities, powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, whether in heaven or on earth. It raised the subjects of the Divine Theocracy to the plane of the Theocratic King Himself. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” (John

xiv. 19.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."
(2 Tim. ii. 12.) "Thou madest them unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth."
(Rev. v. 10.)

6. How did Judaism carry forward the moral development of mankind? Mosaism prescribed the duties of morality in precise terms, and with an authority of the most solemn description. The moral law of the Decalogue was the central principle of Mosaism. Religion demanded the practice of virtue as its outcome and evidence. Yet the history of Judaism testifies to failure. Its development of Mosaism proved the incapacity of law and rigid rule to produce the result of morality. In the case of the best men, and of the best families of Judaic history, gross immoralities are recorded. Think of the man after God's own heart, of David and his grievous transgressions. Think of Solomon, to whom was granted wisdom in answer to his youthful prayer, lapsing into gross immorality and irreligion. Think of the crimes attaching to the members of their families; and remember, moreover, the burden of later prophetic complaint. What is the common topic of all, more

than a bemoaning of spiritual decay and moral degradation, such as called down the Divine anger on wickedness, national, official, personal? The law did not succeed in making a holy nation. It did not prevent the inroads of moral evil. The great moral degeneracy bewailed by the prophets was the cause of ultimate national ruin. The law during its course served only to make sin without excuse. By long trial and constant failure, it proved the incompetency of Mosaism to secure man's salvation, or promote his moral elevation.

Thus we see, on the advent of Christianity, that the spirit of the Law could not be amalgamated with the Gospel. Judaism had latterly become more minute and mechanical than its written Mosaism. It regarded nothing but the external act, and disregarded the internal motive. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." According to perverted Mosaism, *i.e.*, developed Judaism,—“that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man,” whereas the teaching of Christianity was the direct contrary. Mosaism, as

developed in Judaism, finally failed to accomplish that which was its first and central principle. Is its successor, the Christian dispensation, destined to succeed? At least it claims to do so. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son," professes—not in vain—to accomplish. Mosaism presented the Divine moral direction, Judaism supplied the human application, but the object aimed at was not obtained. Something was still wanting which Christianity must supply. The discipline of failure had to be undergone before success could be reached. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

7. Mosaism was rich in ritual, making religious observances a part of the common daily life. With what result did Judaism carry this into practice? Did it eventually improve and deepen the religious feeling? The answer must be in the negative. As time went on, prophetic complaints increased of externalism having supplanted spiritual views and feelings. Religion had too much become a mechanical round of observances. The mere performance of the act had emerged into undue importance, while the motive was put out

of sight and out of account. At the advent of Christianity this tendency had been fully developed. The neglect of ordinances, more or less chargeable against the early and middle periods of Judaism, was succeeded by an excessive attention to them, and multiplication of them. That remarkable phenomenon, the Oral Law, was doubtless the product of the influences to which we have alluded. By multiplication of observances and injunctions, not contained in the Written Law, it so engrossed the mind by the minuteness of its details as to preclude anything like thought or spontaneity. Moreover it sacrificed the second table of the law to an exaggerated and false reverence for the first. Its law of Corban is specially alluded to by our Lord in illustration of this, and is denounced by Him as virtually annulling the spirit of the Law given by God.

The process by which this conclusion was reached is not difficult of explanation. While the people dwelt peacefully in their own land they did not feel so keenly the importance of adhering strictly to their religion in all its points. But the national sufferings attending the downfall of the Davidic monarchy, the captivity in Babylon, and the precarious position which the

Jews occupied after their return, alternately the prey of this aggressor or that—the combination of such circumstances led to their clinging to their law and religion as the great badge of a separate nationality, and the great pledge of their national continuance. The promise of a Deliverer and of future glory to the nation, although imperfectly and even erroneously understood, lightened with hope the darkness through which they were passing. In their deepest abasement they were supported by the expectation of coming good. Naturally they would hold firmly by that law and those prophecies on which their hope was founded, and the negligence of a former period would change into the excess of the present. By our Lord's time all the spirit had gone out of their religious observances, and with excess of form there was an entire lack of the power of godliness. Judaism having grown into such a spirit could not be amalgamated with Christianity, whose first and fiercest conflict was waged against its influence; nor could the conflict cease until the Judaic leaven had been expelled. It was the war of freedom against subjection, of the spirit against the flesh, of vital religion against a system of dead works.

8. The religious instruction provided by Mosaism, and practised in Judaism, was largely symbolical. The instruction was not so much by word as by act. The sacrificial observances pointed to the necessity of atonement; the justice of God must be propitiated for the sin of man. The washings and cleansings taught the necessity of purification in order to acceptance with God. These duties were mainly the function of the priesthood, who were limited to a small portion of the people. The time of the priests was fully occupied in the performance of the religious functions which they alone could discharge. Although other duties of a higher and more ethical character are hinted at, these did not, and probably could not, become the subject of special regulation. Thus the priests were to teach the Children of Israel the statutes of the Lord (Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 10, &c.), and, in the language of the last prophet (Mal. ii. 7), looking back on the ideal of the order, "the priest's lips were to keep knowledge." But whatever might have been the ideal as regards their teaching directly and orally, it never was to any appreciable extent carried into practice, and the people were thus left to gather such meaning as they could out of the

religious symbolism. While some of the better spirits of the nation might penetrate to the spirit of the act, discern its meaning, and be edified, the great bulk of the people would see nothing but the outward performance, and would fail to connect with it any spiritual significance. The religious observances would be to them religion and not merely religious means. The symbolism would fail to teach them what was symbolised.

Was no corrective provided for such an evil, no remedy for such a defect? Not by any regular or permanent institution, but by an occasional interposition of God as the case might require. Such a permanent institution would have been inconsistent with the aim of the Mosaic dispensation, which was substantively directive, making known to man his duty, and submitting to his consideration motives to its performance and deterrents from its violation. Its spirit was expressed in the farewell words of the great law-giver, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." (Deut. xxx. 15.) The purpose of the dispensation was to give a law or directory of duty, and leave man to the trial of his own powers for its observance. It was thus that

men were prepared by trial and failure for the acceptance of the dispensation destined to supersede it. But had they been so left entirely to themselves, it is clear that, supposing the rites of religion to have continued to be regularly performed, their meaning and influence would speedily have been lost. To prevent such a result, God sent prophets from time to time to be preachers of morals and of spiritual religion. The symbolical teaching of the law naturally lost much of its effect, and required to be reinforced from time to time. Instead of learning the necessity of moral purity by the legal washings, the majority came to rest in the outward act as in itself sufficient. It was the work, then, of the prophets to hold up before their countrymen a high and spiritual morality, not veiled in types or symbols, but so expressed that none could profess to misunderstand it. Thus in Isaiah i., the prophet contrasts ceremonial observances with spiritual morality —“Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them. . . . Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the

oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." The system of morals put forward by the prophets, if not higher, and sterner, and purer than that of the law, is more plainly declared, and with greater (because now more needed) vehemence of diction.

In short, the prophets were extraordinary exponents of the law. Their task was to restore the balance which had been overthrown through the people and their teachers dwelling on the outer covering of a truth or of a duty, and leaving out of sight the inner meaning which spiritualised what otherwise had become a dead, unsuggestive symbolism. We speak here of Old Testament prophetism only in one of its relations. In its other aspects, it does not come within our present argument. Its higher purpose of making the promise of a Deliverer clearer and more precise, we do not here discuss. We only allude to its incidental counteractive of that symbolism which, by a natural and necessary process, tended to substitute form for power, mechanical for spiritual religion.

9. Judaism had a long history, and encountered many foes. After being delivered from Egyptian idolatry, ages passed before it was again in contact or con-

flict with it. For long also it was separated from the Polytheism of the East, its first adversary. But, settled in Palestine, it was always exposed to the snares of Phœnician religious influences. Phœnicia was its near neighbour. The native tribes, moreover, were not extirpated from the land, and there were, perhaps, few families in Israel which had not in them some blood of the Phœnician or Canaanite races. In consequence, we see a constant influence from such sources, operating detrimentally on the religious development of the chosen people. Only after the Captivity was the old prescribed separation recognised as a great religious duty, and a duty of constraining necessity. As their outward state decayed or became precarious, there grew on them the feeling of exclusiveness, the consciousness that absolute homogeneity alone could, humanly speaking, preserve their national identity, and continue their national existence till the hoped for fulfilment of the promises should arrive. Hence they cultivated an intense national feeling, born of religion; and thus they were able to encounter, without yielding, the subtler foe of Greek culture to which they became finally exposed. It

cannot be said, indeed, that they remained altogether unaffected by its influence. If Palestinian Judaism was less affected, Alexandrian Judaism was considerably acted upon. But if somewhat influenced by these extraneous forces, it influenced them still more powerfully. Under God's providence, it gave a spiritual meaning to that language which, at the Christian era, was the most widely spoken throughout the civilised world, and prepared it to become the vehicle of Christian inspiration for all lands and all times.

The period intervening between the cessation of prophecy and the coming of Christ, was one of quiet but important work. The leaven of Judaism was silently acting, so as to prepare outside minds and outside language for the great era about to arrive. Philosophy had been undermining the old popular religious beliefs of classical heathendom. It could not provide a substitute for them. It only made a vacuum. Judaism had become too narrow and formal to supply the want. Yet not a few Hellenistic proselytes more or less fully adopted it, and beyond these a preparation was made, and an expectation was begotten, which Christianity came in due time to fulfil. The rapid extension of the

latter is primarily due, doubtless, to the special working of God. Yet we are not to exclude from consideration the human circumstances of the case. The fields were white unto the harvest, and Judaism was no weak element in ripening the nations for the spiritual harvest which then began to be gathered in, and which shall not cease until time shall be no more.

If Judaism, or applied Mosaism, utterly failed, either in spiritually preserving or in elevating one people among the many nations on earth, it served at least to prepare the way for the last and only perfect dispensation, destined never to end and never to fail, but to work out to final and complete success the Divine purpose of grace for the salvation of mankind.

LECTURE VI.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is at once the most Divine and the most human development of religion. It soars highest and nearest to God, and descends lowest, identifying itself most with man. If Adamism was one-sidedly natural, and Mosaism was one-sidedly supernatural; if trial was made of the two separate conceptions, and success failed to be achieved by either, does Christianity supply the solution of the long-unsolved problem? Does it round the circle of religious development, and reach the point beyond which it is neither needful nor possible to go? To answer this question is our present task. The answer is without hesitation—"Yes," and we shall see it to be so, if we only do justice to the grounds on which the answer is given.

1. Adamism was concerned mainly with the past and the present. With the exception of the dim ray of

promised deliverance, it had no future: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Its past was but small to begin with, though gradually extending its dimensions, if little varying its experiences. Its present, however we may interpret the antediluvian years of prolonged life, was large compared with ours. Its centuries have been shortened into our tens. It was as if God in his mercy would break man's fall from a deathless life into a life of death, by making the death penalty rare, and by deferring the period of its exaction, that man might have long space wherein to exercise his powers, and have that benefit from his own experience which he could not then have from the transmitted experience of others before him. Humanism exists under the most favourable conditions, and it fails. Man's long "To-day," almost equivalent to a perpetuity, neither preserves nor promotes him.

Mosaism has its past. The inspired history records that past. It preserves the lessons of bygone experience, and sets them forth for the instruction of man. Its past is long; its present is short—shortened, indeed, to the span which measures the life of mankind

at the present day and within all historic time. Its future is circumscribed within the life on earth, length of days and prosperity in the land of Promise, an earthly hope limited to the time of man's continuance here. I am not unduly minimising either Adamism or Mosaism. By the most learned and honest teachers of modern Mosaism it is admitted that Old Testament Scripture does not convey the assurance of a life beyond the grave. The idea of such a life is not contained in the written law of Moses, and the modern Jews, fully believing in it, rest their faith on the oral law, which they trace up to Moses, although without any good reason for doing so. At the advent of Christ, Christian Inspiration speaks of two sects into which the nation was divided—the Pharisees and Sadducees—the former believing in, the latter denying, a resurrection, or rather a life beyond death. The essential difference between them consisted in the one party accepting and the other rejecting the oral law—the Pharisees tracing it to Moses and giving it an equal authority with his written institutes. Both parties made their final appeal to Moses, the Sadducees on what was written alone, the Pharisees on what was orally as

well as scripturally transmitted. It may appear inexplicable that the Sadducees should have maintained the negative position which they did. But there is nothing unintelligible in their position. Adamism had its present, Mosaism had its present; but neither had a sure foundation for the future. In reality, their future was limited to time and to lifetime. The horizon of earth bounded their view.

How different is Christianity! Christ Jesus "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10). Christianity is the sole possessor of the future. As, "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," so do we, through faith, believe in that transformation and yet perpetuation of existence, which is a peculiar doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like Columbus, Christianity has discovered a new world, has opened up to the view of man a vista stretching out immeasurably—realms of eternity and glory, within which the problems of justice which have puzzled mankind shall be solved, where darkness shall

be converted into light, and the rough places shall be made plain.

But does Christianity, in possessing the future, surrender the past or present? No! The past, indeed, is gone, and can only be recalled for warning, admonition, instruction in righteousness. But the present is shewn to be of an importance never imagined before. On it depend eternal issues. Previously only temporal interests were involved. Doubtless where these were all, they were all-important. In Christianity all former uses of the present are conserved, and they are also extended. "Things present" as well as "things to come" are the chartered possession of the Christian. His present good he is enabled to enjoy with more intensity of pleasure than ever he could before. His present ill he is able to bear, not with patience merely but with joy, reckoning that "the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The religion which has fully possessed time and eternity cannot be outvied. It is impossible to conceive anything higher or more perfect. It embraces all the conditions in which time forms the predominant element.

Further, it is to be remarked that Christianity not only first pronounced clearly on an eternal life beyond death, but first declared fully and satisfactorily its nature. To some extent the hope of future existence was in accordance with both Jewish and heathen opinion—a probable hope, although not a certain faith, fondly expected though not fully assured. The heathen hope pointed to an Elysium of shadows, as it were, to a kind of intellectual abstraction of personal life and identity, to a nebulous world of shades and disembodied spirits, coming far short of the realities of the present existence. The Jewish conception might be more realistic, as when Job in that outburst of joyful anticipation says, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin this body be destroyed, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see from myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another: though my reins be consumed within me.” (Job xix. 25–27.) In this and such passages we have vivid anticipations of man’s final glory and destiny, noble testimonies to an inborn, inarticulate desire, travelling and groaning for assurance. But then we have

with equal frequency the confession of blank, hopeless ignorance. "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job xiv. 14). Text conflicts with text. Put against this the Christian doctrine of a resurrection of the body. In it there is no shrinking doubtfulness of anticipation. Fully and boldly the doctrine is asserted of a complete restoration from the penalty of sin. Not only is the immortal part of man's nature, the soul, delivered from death, but the body is also. Corruption is transformed into incorruption. The natural rises up into the spiritual. Even here, the Divine and the human find their full development in that harmonious and perfect whole which links the higher and lower in a bond never to be broken. When Paul at Athens spoke of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked (some are mocking at this present time), others, more cautious, reserved their opinion. "We will hear thee again of this matter." This great revelation of Christianity—the resurrection of the body, as well as the immortality of the soul—meets and satisfies the cravings of human nature in their fullest extent, and leaves nothing unfulfilled in the subject-matter any more than in the time-measure of human aspiration.

2. Such is the end. Now as to the means. As to this point, can we find a perfect combination of the human and Divine? Primeval religion depends on nature; Mosaism on law; Christianity on grace. Or, to describe them a little more minutely, Adamism relies wholly on itself; it was the image of God; God's revelation was its own nature. The Fall brought an obscuration, but not absolute, blank darkness. Nature was exhibited, under favourable circumstances, endeavouring to rise above its conditions, and not merely to conserve them. Adamism failed. In the Scripture narrative its overwhelming failure is embodied in the Flood. Its spirit is not dead. In the present time it is, more than formerly, alive, *i.e.*, the idea of an innate perfectibility of human nature, or, in other words, man's self-sufficiency. Reason has time after time proved its insufficiency. Give it scope, and the result speedily demonstrates that it is an unsafe guide, nay, more than unsafe—it conducts to ruin. No long or large experience is required to prove its incapacity.

Mosaism is man not left entirely to himself, but directed and helped, yet much being left to his own

effort. As Adamism leaves all to man—a favourite theory of many in the present day—so Mosaism qualifies this human self-sufficiency by introducing an external and a higher influence, directive, rather than supplementary or substitutional. It also has failed. Its long trial and more favourable circumstances have only proved its incompetency. Then Christianity comes; and how does it stand related to the other two? In what respects does it claim a position different from them and independent of them? As regards Adamism, it accepts all its position of pure Humanism. It does not destroy man's responsibility. It works from and through human nature. But accepting that nature as its basis, it does not acquiesce in it as fallen, as in that state of spiritual death and consequent corruption in which historically Adamism ended. Christianity renovates human nature. It regenerates man and quickens him to newness of life. And it is from this starting-point that Christianity works out its mission. It refurbishes the weapon with which it is to wage the spiritual warfare of resistance to evil. We cannot wonder, then, that regeneration should be a fundamental principle in Christianity. To the ruler of the

Jews, our Saviour's pregnant words in John iii. might seem raving; yet, once fairly understood, they commend themselves to the reasoning mind with all the force of demonstration.

Observe the conjunction of human and Divine in this Christian development. Christianity takes human nature as the Fall has left it, but by a Divine operation breathes into it a new life and spirit, and then—Divinely human—proceeds to unfold the powers for good which did not reside in the unbalanced humanity of the Fall.

Then as to the relation of Christianity to the principle of Mosaism. Mosaism gave, in addition to human knowledge, a law divinely expressed and sanctioned. It pronounced clearly what is right and what is wrong, thus supplementing pure Adamism, and removing that dubiety which must always attach to the moral conclusions of pure reason. Scripture takes due notice of Mosaism as an advance on Adamism: "Until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses." (Rom. v. 13, 14.) Or, to paraphrase the teaching of this and other Scriptures—

Transgression of moral duty is always justly punishable, but the clearer the declaration of duty, the greater the guilt and the heavier the condemnation; "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." (Rom. ii. 12). There was thus an advance from Adamism to Mosaism, but it was one in degree and not in kind. Mosaism gave clearer direction as to duty, but furnished no further help towards its discharge. There was obviously something wanting, and this Christianity supplies. It does all that previous dispensations did in the way of direction; deepening the conception, and making clearer the comprehension of duty; propounding its simple basis of love, as well as giving the details of its practice. But it does more—it supplies the power before wanting. It not only gives a Teacher—like Adamism in man's moral nature, reminiscent of the uprightness preceding the Fall; like Mosaism in the heaven-promulgated precepts of morality—a Teacher sent from God, who spake as never man spake, who spake plainly and not in parable; but it also gives the Holy Spirit, to enable as well as to enlighten. It takes account of man's

moral weakness, as well as of his moral and spiritual darkness ; and it is thus the first to supply that want, for which previous dispensations made no adequate provision. When we consider this, our wonder ceases at the Lord's words spoken to His immediate followers, "It is expedient for you that I go away." He had been their Teacher, their Pattern, their Friend, and He always, present or absent, would be so. But the great Gospel promise was not complete until the Comforter was sent, to lead them unto all truth, to uphold them in all good, to bear up their weakness as by Almighty arms. Human insufficiency is supplemented by Divine all-sufficiency, and man, who could do nothing as it ought to be done of himself, is enabled both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Thus does the work of the Spirit come not tentatively or accidentally, but necessarily as a final and full consummation of that which was incomplete before. To exclude the Spirit's work is to reduce Christianity to the imperfect conditions of preceding dispensations. It is an abnegation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Still further, in connection with means, we cannot overlook the relation in which man stands to God.

Man is not merely incompetent in himself for the fulfilment of duty, as demanded by nature and Revelation. He is in a state of condemnation. He is "sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 14). Redemption, deliverance from the penalty as well as from the power of sin, is required in order to man's full recovery. Adamism only suggests this. Under its conditions it could not be expected to do more. Its function was to test the recuperative power of man within his own competency, with little more extraneous encouragement than the assurance of final victory: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Mosaism recognised more fully the necessity of redemption and reconciliation. It prescribed expiatory sacrifices, recognising the truth that Divine justice must be satisfied in some way by the exaction of the penalty, if not from the sinner himself, at least from an appointed substitute. This institution of sacrifice served to illustrate the great truth, that by some means God must be just, while He is the justifier of the ungodly. But to ordinary reason, it must have been self-evident that such offerings furnished no adequate satisfaction to Divine justice. The payment bore no proportion to the debt. These Mosaic sacrifices served

well enough as symbols, but came altogether short of inherent efficiency: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb. x. 4.) Some more adequate provision must be found, and it is found in Christianity alone. It provides a worthy substitute for man, the Perfect Man, the Man Christ Jesus. All man's guilt is laid on Him. He endures the full stroke of Divine justice. He is a sacrifice adequate to every requirement. He is without spot and blameless. He is not merely a substitute (like an irrational animal which could be nothing more than a factitious, unreal substitute); He is the very impersonation of humanity, without sin of His own, yet voluntarily taking on Him the sins of the whole race and draining their cup of judgment to the last dregs. The sacrifice of perfect Humanity was "salted" also by its conjunction with perfect Divinity. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son."

In short, the older dispensations, dimly shadowing forth the want rather than supplying it, pointed the thoughtful mind to such a solution of the great problem of redemption as Christianity alone, but fully, gives.

Thus also the evangelical theory of redemption is

found to be alone satisfactory, because it alone fully responds to the aspirations which previous dispensations recognised but failed to satisfy. What is called the orthodox doctrine recommends itself as agreeable to development as well as to Scripture. It is the outcome of all human experience and thought. It is not something casually projected into the process of human opinion, but a veritable development out of conditions previously existent, unable to solve themselves, yet easily solvable when Revelation has given the key to the mystery. To recede from the orthodox notion of redemption, in other words, from the conception of Christ as man's Substitute, and from His sacrifice as a real atonement—to regard His sufferings merely as an example and incitement to patience, bringing Him down to the position of one among a "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. xii.),—would be to fall even lower than Mosaism. It would deprive even the Mosaic typology of all meaning. Christ's substitution for man appears so inwoven with the Christian idea, so absolutely belonging to its essence, that we cease to wonder at the tenacity with which the Church has adhered to it through ages of controversy, or at its steady develop-

ment by human thought as it operated on the declarations of God's word.

4. If we contrast the scope of Christianity with that of the preceding dispensations, we shall equally perceive its superiority and finality. The primeval dispensation was, indeed, applicable to the whole race, although it proved utterly inefficient to preserve or save them. On the other hand, Mosaism professedly applied only to a section of mankind. Its religious rites could not admit of universal extension. It carried within itself the proof of its imperfection. At most it could but train and prepare for a system equal to the accomplishment of what for itself was impossible. Having served this end, it necessarily gave place to Christianity, which proclaims itself universal. "Go and teach all nations." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

The scope of the Gospel could not be confined within a race or nation. If for a time and a purpose Religion recedes from all-embracing extensiveness, and entrenches itself in a citadel with its outworks of ritual, privilege, and exclusion, yet the Divine Spirit will burst the barriers of temporary necessity, and the love of God will not be content with less than the

whole race, formed at first in His image, being restored again to the enjoyment of that destiny which their transgression at first frustrated. There has been a "systole" and a "diastole" (to borrow a simile from the action of the heart), a gathering of the life blood of salvation to a centre, only to be succeeded by a permanent diffusion of life and health to all the extremities of the body. Restrictions are entirely abrogated. All party walls are cast down. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free ; but Christ is all and in all." (Col. iii. 11.) We are not to overlook the importance of this Christian feature of a universal scope simply because it is familiar to us, and because, owing to our habit of thought, the contrary conception would seem to us unnatural. It was a great advance on its first introduction. The Jewish mind, long trained to the contracted idea of national privilege, was slow to apprehend the universalism of Christianity. It required a special revelation, in addition to the suggestive teaching of Christ, to make even the Apostle Peter comprehend this new feature of the Gospel, and give utterance, in words of surprise and amazement, to

the broad truth which his traditions and education had so long prevented him from recognising. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." (Acts x. 34.)

In connection with this idea of Christian universalism regarding the offer and application of Christianity, we must notice the simplification of positive injunctions which characterises the last dispensation. Mosaic complexity contrasts remarkably with Christian simplicity. All that is local gives place to what is adapted to be universal. Externalism gives way to what is spiritual. No holy places, no appointed times, are any longer set apart and marked with a peculiar sanctity. The abolition of a ritual laying stress on places, times, and external observances, marks the expansion from the particular to the general, from the special to the universal. "Let no man judge you," says the Apostle, speaking of the former with reference to the latter, "in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 16, 17.)

Similarly the superiority of Christianity is displayed in its dropping of the incidental, and bringing forward of the essential, in all matters of moral duty. Christianity lays stress not so much on the outward act in which a duty is exhibited, as on the inner spiritual character which essentially distinguishes it. The outward act may be the same in any two cases, and yet in the one only it may be praiseworthy, while in the other it is blameable. It is not the act regarded outwardly, but the act in relation to the motive by which it is dictated, and to the spirit in which it is performed, that presents a moral aspect of good or evil. And Christianity analyses human action not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively. It does not affix moral value to the deed of duty according to the human measure of quantity. Prayer is not measured by length or loudness, but by the spirit of humility, by the sense of dependence on God which it displays. Benevolence is not gauged morally by the amount of its contributions, but by the proportion of unworldliness of which it is the sign. Christianity does not appraise liberality by the munificent offerings of the wealthy, casting into the treasury out of their abundance, but commends the

widow's mites as far above the other contributions in value, if far below them in amount. A theory of morality such as this indicates, proves the universal adaptiveness of Christianity. There is a divine judgment of the morally good and great, combined with a respect of human conditions which abolishes the monopoly of moral worth that would confine it to a class, and brings the attainment of moral praise within the reach of poor as well as rich, of low as well as great. This character pervades the whole Christian conception of morality, as it never pervaded any previous system. The Gospel is divinely great and humanly adaptive. Its tendency is to depress none, but to elevate all. Only the proud are abased, the humble are exalted.

5. Principle (as we have had occasion to indicate) is largely bound up with person. That is, the leading personality in the introduction of a dispensation is so far characteristic of the dispensation with which as a person he is associated. Judged by such a test, Christianity approves itself superior to all that preceded, and more than superior,—final, perfect, and incapable of being advanced to a higher stage. We need hardly dwell on this point, although it is not of small import-

ance. Scripture frequently suggests both the comparison and the conclusion. It contrasts the Christ of Christianity with the Adam of the Adamite or primeval dispensation. The Former is a quickening spirit, while the latter is but a living soul. In the one is life, after a fashion, but a life tending to decay and death. In the Other there is a power which quickens from death into life—life that can never end.

Naturalism has in it a life; for to the present time it lives, and through all past time has lived, striving against the influences which doom it to death, yet striving in vain. Christianity (Grace) takes up humanity where nature has left it, dead, corrupt, lost, and redeems it from perdition, restores it from corruption, and quickens from death into life. We need not further dilate on the contrast between Adam and Christ, which was considered in a former connection. Only it is proper here to observe the contrast between the two great representatives of humanity and religion, as indicating the infinite superiority of the one over the other. Scripture no less institutes a parallel between Moses and Christ, to shew the unapproachable superiority of the Latter over the former. "The law was

given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17). The one was an adumbration, the other was the reality. Other contrasts which Scripture draws between the two, more especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, will be readily recalled.

To sum up the gradual development which culminates in Christianity, Adam was God's image, was godlike. Moses was a man God-inspired, near to God, familiar with him—God speaking unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. But Christ is more than all that. He is not merely God's Image, but God Himself. He is not merely God's Friend, but God's Essence. He is God-man. He combines in His one Person the humanity of the one and the Divinity of the Other.

As a matter of historical comparison, could the ideal be raised higher? Or on the ground of pure reason, could a higher conception of a perfect Author of faith be required? And still more is the idea of the incomparable Personality of Christ capable of expansion from the Christian standpoint. For the Apostle Paul says, in words of deep significance, rising from the concrete to the ideal, from sense to faith—"Though we

have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." (2 Cor. v. 16). His visible Humanity is but a ladder to raise us to the conception of that Divine perfection which, because it is Divine, is also invisible.

6. In its external relations, Christianity is as superior to previous dispensations as we have seen it to be in other respects. Every religious dispensation has its foes, with whom it wages warfare. Adamism had the innate corruption of fallen nature as its special foe. So has Christianity, and we have already seen how much more effectively it can cope with such an adversary than unassisted nature. Mosaism had idolatry to contend with, Egyptian, Assyrian, Phœnician,—subtle irreligion, as well as brute force. Such enemies Christianity also has been called upon to encounter. But, more than these, it has met and conquered, in its first historical stage, not only the hostile power of civil rule and the sarcasm of polished culture, but also the most acute assaults of human intellect, not to speak of those malign and mysterious influences which are alluded to, rather than expressly named, in the inspired Scriptures. It has wrestled not only "against flesh and blood"

(enemies seen and known) but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. v. 12.) It has wrestled, and prevailed. Like its great Author, it has gone forth "conquering and to conquer."

We have seen Adamism in its historical development act its part, and finally fail. We have seen Mosaism, with its historical development in Judaism, act its part, and also fail, at least in so far that it could not grasp the substance of which it was itself the shadow. What shall be the fate of Christianity, which lays down the weapons of carnal warfare, and relies only on principles, no doubt divinely sanctioned and enforced, yet acting on humanity only by moral influence and persuasion? Unlike Adamism, whose history has been written in Patriarchism, and unlike Mosaism whose history has been unfolded in Judaism, Christianity has its unknown future as well as its recorded past. Its history is only in process of development. What presage of the final issue shall we form? Is the issue to be success or failure? If we judge by its distinctive principles, we can augur nothing but final

triumph. If they are not fitted to snatch a sudden victory, they are such as to assure a steady, untiring resistance and aggression against evil, and influence for good. And if we regard the indications which its past history gives us of its future and ultimate results, we have no reason to despond ; for, short as it may hitherto have come of its ideal, it has not been inoperative or inefficient.

We are apt to undervalue the success Christianity has already achieved. If it has not done all, it has at least done much. It has leavened the world and the course of its affairs with a new spirit. It has breathed into legislation and administration a charity which did not distinguish them before. It has covered Christendom with institutions of benevolence, the very idea, as well as existence, of which was before unknown. It has infused a new spirit into public life, and into all the relations in which man can stand towards man. It has done much already, and what has been done gives the promise and assurance of more. It has passed through every conceivable trial to which it could be subjected. Intellectualism has oftener than once threatened to prove it to be foolishness, yet has recoiled from the

assault, baffled and defeated. Ages of darkness and deadness have not extinguished its light or its vitality. Now, to outward seeming, rolled back, and now advancing, its march has ever been onward, bringing individual after individual, and nation after nation, under its benignant sway, and even in the most dismal periods giving the assurance that "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Is. xi. 9.) Both history and reason lead us to adopt the confident expectation of the great Apostle—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. ix. 4-5.)